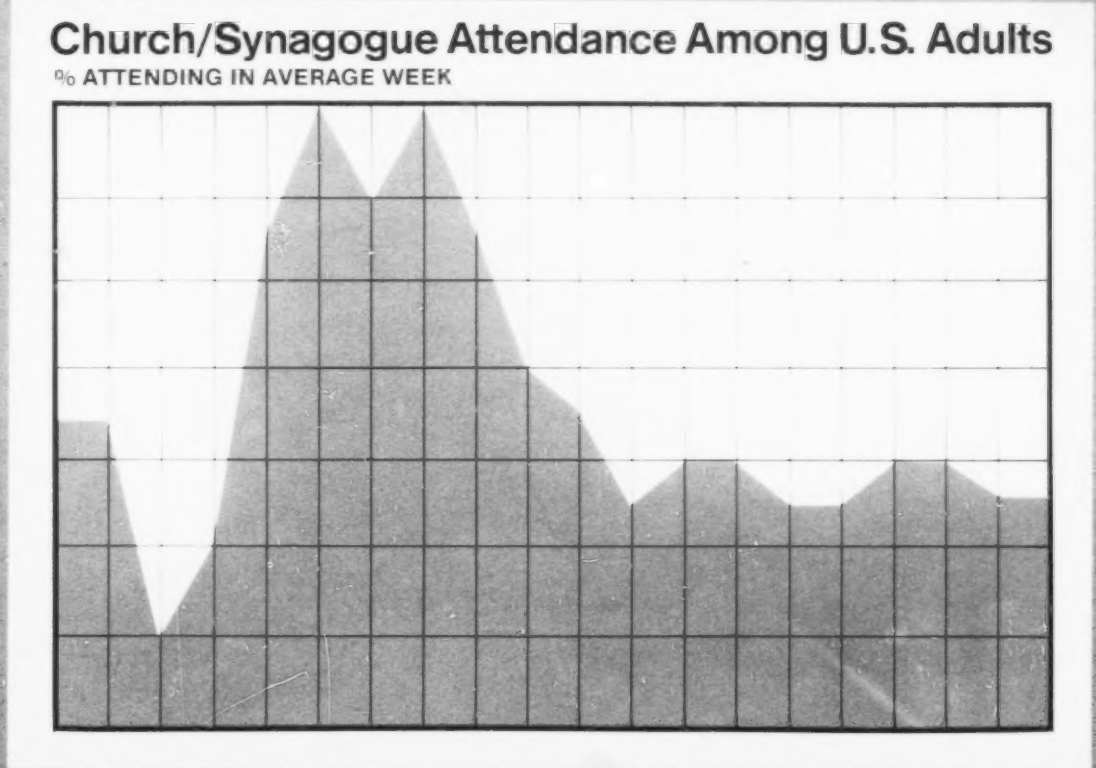
Religion in America

50 Years: 1935-1985



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Important Notes to Readers

The Sample: The sampling procedure of the Gallup Poll is designed to produce samples which are representative of the U.S. civilian adult population. National survey results are based on in-person interviews with a minimum of 1,500 adults. In certain sets of findings, numerous surveys have been combined to build up the sample base.

Sampling tolerances: In interpreting survey results, it should be remembered that all sample surveys are subject to sampling error, that is, the extent to which the results may differ from what would be obtained if the whole population had been interviewed. Samples of 1,500 have a tolerance within 3 percentage points 95 percent of the time. Certain population groups are not reported separately for many surveys because the number of persons in the sample is not enough to provide sufficiently accurate results.

Jews in samples: For many sets of survey results in this report, there are an insufficient number of Jews in the sample to provide projectible data.

Denomination headings: In some cases, churches of the same family have been grouped under general headings—for example, "Methodist churches" —because the size of the sample does not permit reporting churches within that group.

Projecting survey results: The survey results in this report can be projected to the total (civilian, non-institutionalized) adult population. For this purpose, use a total adult, civilian, non-institutionalized population figure of approximately 169 million (at mid-point in 1984).

Survey dates: The latest findings are based on surveys conducted in 1984 and 1985.

Charts: In reading the charts in this report it is important to bear in mind that the differences in the national findings between surveys should be five percentage points or more to be statistically significant.

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50 Years: 1935-1985

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I
50 Years of Gallup Surveys on Religion

by

George Gallup, Jr.

With the advent of scientific polling a half century ago, much of the guesswork has been taken out of appraising the spiritual condition of America and the world. Since 1935 we have had a technique denied those who, in earlier years, commented on the religious scene.

Yet probably no more difficult task faces the research practitioner than attempting to measure the religious mood of the public. There is much about religion that defies statistical description; questions are blunt instruments while religious beliefs are varied and subtle and do not yield easily to categorization.

Complicating the effort to assess the spiritual climate through survey research is the difficulty of examining the findings on the basis of religious groups—for example, fundamentalists, evangelicals and charismatics—because the terms are in flux, blurred and overlapping.

Martin E. Marty in *A Nation of Behavers* (The University of Chicago Press, 1976) writes about six groupings that he believes comprise religious America—groupings based primarily on what people *do*, not what they *say* or *believe*. These are: Mainline Religion, Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism, Pentecostal-Charismatic Religion, the New Religions, Ethnic Religion and Civil Religion.

Not only must the survey researcher in his assessment of the religious character of America be sensitive to groupings such as those described by Marty, but he must try to determine whether national religious trends apply to both those *within* the church and those *without*—the churched and the unchurched.

While major problems face the survey researcher, carefully conducted surveys do provide a degree of insight into the changing religious scene that we would not otherwise have. And the steadily increasing output of survey statistics on religion in recent decades is helping to fill some of the gaps in our knowledge.

It is important, I believe, that we expand our efforts to explore the religious mood of our society for three reasons:

Sociological: Survey evidence suggests that the spiritual dynamic in American life often has more to do with how we think and behave than do such traditional background characteristics as gender, race, age and level of education.

Practical: Before churches can plan for the future and operate on the basis of facts rather than assumptions, they need answers to questions such as: What are the current levels of religion and belief among parishioners? To what extent do people put their faith into practice? What spiritual needs are not being met by churches?

Religious: If, as a majority in the Free World believes, there is a God who is interested in humankind, it becomes our urgent duty to examine the relationship of human beings to God with all the skill we can muster, including the use of scientific polling.

Trends in Society During Last 50 Years

The changes that have occurred in the United States over the last 50 years—and the speed with which they have come about—are unprecedented, and have had a powerful impact on the religious life of Americans. The major events of this period that have conditioned religious thought and belief include: the Great Depression of the 1930's, World War II, the post-war economic recovery, the advent of television, the Cold War and concern over the internal threat of Communism, the Korean War, the Second Vatican Council, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, urban riots, campus unrest, Watergate and the resignation of President Richard Nixon, stagflation, environmental and ecological problems, the nuclear threat and finally, in the last few years, a growing mood of national optimism.

Religious Trends During Last 50 Years

In broad terms, the major perceivable swings in the religious life of the nation were, first, a post World War II surge of interest in religion characterized by increased church membership and attendance, a growth in Bible reading, increased giving to churches, and extensive church building. Religious leaders such as Billy Graham, Norman Vincent Peale and Fulton Sheen had wide followings during this period.

This surge lasted until the late 1950's or early 1960's. Then followed a decline in religious interest and involvement in the 1960's and 1970's. Now, in the 1980's, there appears to be a "bottoming out" in certain indicators, if not a reversal of some of the declines. In addition, surveys indicate a new interest in religious and spiritual matters.

Pronounced changes have also occurred in the *focus* of religious interest and activity over the last half century. In the 1950's there was a tendency to view religion as supportive of the American way of life; in the 1960's, an anti-establishment mood coupled with an emphasis on social activism; in the 1970's, a retreat from activism to individualism and a concentration on personal spirituality; and finally, in the 1980's, a renewed search for spiritual moorings, as well as evidence of "new activism" on the part of the leadership of churches, speaking out on issues such as church and state and abortion.

In examining the trends of the last half-century it should be borne in mind that most of the changes have been relatively small and have been most pronounced among young adults. Shifts in religious practice have been generally in the same direction for churches of the three major faiths—Protestant, Catholic and Jewish—although some differences in growth patterns are noted between the moderate to liberal churches as opposed to the more conservative churches.

Writing about the period of 1950 to the late 1970's, Jackson W. Carroll, Douglas W. Johnson and Martin E. Marty (*Religion in America, 1950 to the Present*, Harper and Row, 1979) noted these further characteristics about the trends since the 1950's: "....evidence of a tendency to view religion as useful for some personal or social end rather than as an expression of devotion to God alone; an increase in the concern for adjustment to this life, in contrast to preparing for life after death." They further note that "growth seems to have occurred most frequently among two kinds of religious expressions—on the one hand, the conservative or evangelical Protestant churches, and on the other hand, in the various non-traditional, often non-Christian, religious movements and in related quasi-religious movements that provide the technologies of the spirit."

Certain of the Gallup indicators of religion do show marked changes—for example, the proportion of those who say religion is very important in their lives dropped from 75 percent in 1952 to

56 percent in the late-1970's and 1980's. In addition, the number of Biblical "literalists" declined sharply from the early 1960's to the late 1970's. Yet despite these changes, perhaps the most appropriate word to use to describe the religious character of the nation as a whole over the last half century is "stability." Basic religious beliefs, and even religious practice, today differ relatively little from the levels recorded 50 years ago.

In fact, the nation in some respects has remained remarkably orthodox—even fundamentalist—in its beliefs. For example, nearly half of all people interviewed in a 1982 survey accepted "creationism"—that God created man during the last 10,000 years—and a consistent one-third of the population believes the Bible to be literally true, word for word.

Following is a decade-by-decade summary of Gallup survey data on religion in America:

1930's

Although scientific surveys on religion for the nation as a whole were virtually non-existent prior to the nineteen thirties, the observation of astute commentators on the American scene, including Alexis de Tocqueville, clearly pointed to a vigorous religious tradition stemming from colonial times. While the data available indicates that the level of church membership was far lower in the nineteenth century and in the first decades of the current century than it is today, it is probably safe to assume that the vast majority of Americans were "believers."

At any rate, a high level of religious involvement was apparent in Gallup Polls in the late 1930's that showed 7 in 10 to be church members and about 4 in 10 attending church or synagogue in a typical week.

A 1938 Gallup survey showed the Bible to be the most popular single book on American bookshelves, slightly ahead of *Gone With the Wind*. The Bible was also the number one book choice in many subsequent surveys but then as now, comparatively few read it. Age was an important factor in the responses in that survey, with 37 percent of persons 50 and older naming the Bible their top choice, compared to 17 percent among those 30 to 49 years old and only 6 percent among the youngest group, 21 to 29.

An interesting survey in 1936 sought the public's views on a proposed moratorium on preaching. The Rev. Dr. Frederick S. Fleming, rector of Trinity Church, New York City, in August of that year declared that the Christian Church "would once again bring salvation to the world and begin to save its own soul," if it had the "courage" to declare a temporary moratorium on preaching. But his views were strenuously opposed by Dr. John Haynes Holmes, pastor of New York City's Community Church, who said: "Dr. Fleming is wrong, terribly wrong...Christianity never had greater preachers than at this hour, as witness Dr. Fosdick, Bishop McConnell...Dr. Henry Sloan Coffin...and the late beloved Dr. S. Parkes Cadman. A moratorium on such men would be moral bankruptcy."

When the Gallup Poll put the issue to the public, the vote was 8 to 2 against omitting sermons and lectures from Sunday worship for a period of one or two years. Large majorities of both church members and non-members opposed a moratorium on sermons, although the latter were somewhat more inclined than the former to support such a move.

At the end of the decade, in 1939, a cross-section of Americans were asked if their parents went to church more often or less often then they did. Half (50 percent) said more often, while 18 percent said less often and 32 percent the same. Asked whether or not interest in religion had increased in their own communities, 27 percent of survey respondents in farm areas, 29 percent in small towns, and 42 percent in the cities, answered in the affirmative.

When asked what churches could do to increase the interest of the public in religion, a majority said nothing, but those with views gave the following responses:

1. Select ministers who are more intelligent.
2. Arrange more social activities around the churches.
3. Become more modern and liberal.
4. Eliminate hypocrisy.
5. Stop emphasizing money and contributions.
6. Let church people be more friendly.

1940's

The role of the church in wartime was a controversial issue in the early 1940's and stirred up heated debate among the clergy. A July 1942 Gallup Poll showed 6 in 10 among the clergy believing the church should support the war and give full cooperation to the government in the war effort, but 4 in 10 were either opposed or unsure.

In another 1942 survey, 10 percent of Americans reported reading the Bible daily but as many as 41 percent said they had not read the Bible within the previous twelve months. But concern about the war caused increasing numbers of Americans—especially young adults—to turn to the Bible, and "occasional" Bible reading registered an upswing.

The proportion of daily Bible readers has remained fairly stable throughout the last four decades, but a slight overall uptrend is noted from the first measurement—from 10 percent in 1942 and 1944 to 12 percent in a 1952 survey to 14 percent in 1965, 12 percent in 1978 and 15 percent in a 1984 survey.

Four in ten adults (43 percent) reported to Gallup interviewers in 1947 that they said grace aloud at home before family meals. This proportion grew to 69 percent in 1962, but subsequently declined to 57 percent in 1979.

Church membership, survey evidence showed, moved up slightly during the 1940's. Upwards of 4 in 10 attended church or synagogue weekly. And a 1947 survey showed more than 8 in 10 having attended religious services during a twelve month period.

Belief levels among Americans were very high. A 1947 Gallup survey in 11 nations showed 9 in 10 Americans saying they believed in God, the highest recorded for any nation, in sharp contrast to 2 out of 3 believers in France. Seven in ten Americans said they believed in an afterlife; the lowest proportion holding this belief was found in Great Britain and Sweden (49 percent in each nation).

Clearly many Americans during this period felt the need to grow spiritually with 2 in 3 Catholics favoring religious retreats and at least half of Protestants saying they liked the idea of going to a quiet place for a few days to meditate about their spiritual life.

Can Christianity and Communism Mix?

One area of debate during the late 1940's was the question of whether Christianity and Communism could mix—could a person be a good Christian and a Communist at the same time? In the Catholic Church's battle against Communism in Europe, Pope Pius XII had laid down the dictum that Christianity and Communism are irreconcilable. Some Communists, however, maintained that Communist theory is very similar to the teachings of Jesus Christ. A Gallup survey, however, showed an overwhelming proportion of Americans agreeing with the Pope's position on the matter.

Gallup surveys in 1947 showed that the ratio of Protestants to Catholics was far higher than it is today, with 69 percent of U.S. adults identifying themselves as Protestants compared to 20 percent of Catholics. Today, the percentages are 57 percent and 28 percent, respectively. Furthermore, the proportion of persons who gave their religious preference as Jewish was more than twice as high in 1947 (5 percent) than it is today (2 percent).

Ladies' Home Journal Survey

In 1947 the *Ladies' Home Journal* commissioned a nationwide Gallup survey to assess the intensity of religious faith in the United States and the degree to which it governed the ethics and behavior of the American people at that time. The survey followed three levels of inquiry: What did Americans believe? How fervent were their beliefs? Did they live according to their faith?

This survey, one of the first scientific efforts to explore the religious views of Americans in depth, drew the basic conclusion that while the religious potential in the United States was very great, its quality and active influence on American life were not so apparent.

Social observers would likely maintain that the findings of that survey shed light not only on the religious thinking and practice of the 1940's, but on the situation today, as well. Lincoln Barnett, in an article based on the survey (*God and the American People*, Ladies' Home Journal, November 1948) wrote:

"...Although 95 percent of the American people say they believe in God, it is by no means clear that they acknowledge the God of Biblical revelation, who speaks to man from beyond himself and awakens in him a sense of dependency, moral unworthiness and obligation to obey His will."

Barnett further noted a "profound gulf" between America's avowed ethical standards and the observable realities of national life. "What may be more alarming," he wrote "is the gap between what Americans think they do and what they do. The extent of this national schizophrenia is made perfectly clear by the paradox that (1) 8 out of 10 Americans think that most of America's problems would be solved by absolute adherrence to the law of love, and (2) 8 out of 10 Americans think they themselves obey the law of love. Thus someone else is at fault. Here indeed is a revelation of man's final sin, which Luther defined as his unwillingness to admit he is a sinner."

Completing this rather bleak picture was another set of findings from the same survey that gave clear evidence that the average American's religious thinking had not advanced beyond the Sunday-school level.

Expectations for Next 50 Years

A Christmas Day 1949 release, part of a series on expectations for the next half century, found Americans predicting more rather than less churchgoing in the next 50 years. Their predictions proved to be on target for the coming decade, if not beyond.

What did Americans think churches could do to increase attendance? Here is what the public said in a survey conducted in 1948:

Better services	17%
More programs to rouse interest of youth	9
More social functions	8
Better leaders, men of higher caliber	7
Make religion more practical, more down to earth	6
More evangelism, drive for members	6
Be less secular, more democratic	4
Less hypocrisy	3
All others	5
Nothing needed	4
No opinion	32
	101%*

*Adds to more than 100% because some people named more than one item.

1950's

The 1950's were ushered in following the wave of post-World War II recovery, with business and industry expanding and a tremendous growth in the cities and suburbs. The decade of the fifties was for the most part, a period of relative quiet.

It was also a decade of religious revival with rapid growth in church membership, especially in the booming new suburbs. But some social observers have questioned the authenticity of the revival and the depth of religious commitment, and charged that many Americans were attending church in greater numbers because it was "the thing to do."

Sociologists saw civil religion operative in the lives of Americans, described by Bellah and Goodin as a shared, public faith in the nation, a faith linked to people's everyday life through a set of beliefs, symbols and rituals that contain religious elements and overtones that are not formally affiliated with any particular religion.

The state of religious knowledge during this period (as in later decades) was anything but impressive. Fewer than half in a 1950 survey could give the names of any of the first four books of the New Testament. And only 1 person in 3 could name all four of the gospels.

This sad state of Biblical knowledge was also apparent later in a 1954 survey in which it was discovered that only 34 percent of Americans knew who, according to the Bible, delivered the Sermon on the Mount. Survey respondents did better on naming Jesus's birthplace (two-thirds were able to do so).

The figures had improved somewhat by 1982, as the following table shows, but are not that impressive considering the advance

in the level of formal education between 1954 and 1982 and the fact that the large majority of Americans have attended Sunday School or its equivalent.

Religious Knowledge of Americans

Knew Who Delivered Sermon on the Mount	
1954	34%
1982	42
Could Name All Four Gospels	
1954	35%
1982	46
Knew Where Jesus was Born	
1954	74%
1982	70

A major survey in 1952, conducted by Ben Gaffin and Associates for the *Catholic Digest* (and duplicated later by The Gallup Organization, also for the *Catholic Digest*), covered some of the more significant aspects of religion in mid-century America. In a book based on the 1952 survey, *Religion and the American People* (The Newman Press, Westminister, Maryland, 1963) John L. Thomas, S.J. wrote about the low level of religious knowledge:

"Although all [survey respondents] received some type of early religious training as children, their study of religion apparently ended during this period. As a result, a good proportion of Americans apparently go through life with the immature, more or less superficial religious knowledge and conceptions acquired as children. Since religion is uniformly regarded as a good thing, they support it; finding themselves classified in a religious community, they experience a certain consciousness of kind, at least in regard to the outgroups; the fact that they make little or no effort to deepen their understanding of religion indicates that it does not rank very high in their scale of important life values."

Despite the low level of religious knowledge, the 1950's saw considerable growth in religious interest and activity. As indicated earlier, some perceived this movement as a superficial and generalized return to religion with a tendency to fuse religion with American democratic values, rather than a genuine renewal or revival. But the fact remained that religious indicators rose sharply. Church attendance, which had been charted by the Gallup Poll since 1939, reached high points in 1955 and 1958.

Church membership remained high during this decade. Three persons in 4 (75 percent) in 1952 said religion was very important in their lives, a figure that was to drop to 52 percent by 1978. In 1957, 7 in 10 (69 percent) said religion was increasing its influence on American life, compared to only 14 percent who felt that its influence was waning. By 1970 these figures were reversed. Eight in 10 in 1957 said religion could answer all or most contemporary problems; this figure dropped to 55 percent in 1984, although it has increased slightly to 61 percent in 1985.

Many non-survey indicators documented a rise in religious interest: an increase in the sale of books on religion, the enormous popularity of Graham, Peale and Sheen, extensive church building, and the like.

In a 1954 survey, Americans were asked to try to account for the rise in churchgoing in the 1950's. The chief reason given was fear, unrest, uncertainty of the future, named by 30 percent. Next were renewed faith in God as Supreme Being (19 percent), effect of religion on military personnel during the war (11 percent) and improvement in church programming and publicity (9 percent).

A remarkable 24 percent of U.S. adults said that sometime during 1957 they had called on people to ask them to join or attend their church. And as many as 60 percent said they had been called upon to do so. Most active in evangelization efforts were Baptists, a finding that helps explain why Baptist churches (particularly Southern Baptist) did not suffer the membership losses of other churches during the 1960's and 1970's.

Religious interest and involvement were running high, but there were also worrisome findings from the point of view of organized religion: knowledge of basic facts about Christianity remained low, as indicated earlier; and a large majority of Americans (78 percent) felt that one could be a good Christian and not go to church.

The upsurge of interest in religion in the 1950's, which began after World War II, was, according to historians, the seventh in a series of "reawakenings" which have swept this continent starting with the Great Awakening of 1730, associated with Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield. The last revival—prior to the mid-twentieth century revival—occurred in the 1920's and is associated with Billy Sunday and his "old-time religion."

1960's

The 1960's was a period of major change and upheavals—rapid technological advances; the full emergence of the civil rights movement—sit-ins, freedom rides, bombings, the March on Washington and the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act; urban riots and the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Robert Kennedy; anti-war protests over Vietnam; the beginnings of the women's liberation movement; the rise of the counterculture; and strong anti-establishment feelings, particularly on the part of young people.

Marked change and upheaval were found in the churches as well: the involvement of the clergy in civil rights and anti-war protests; radical theology; situation ethics and the "new morality"; stirrings of the charismatic and neo-Pentecostal movement within the Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant churches; widespread activity in social justice causes.

Churches in the 1960's were facing a crisis. The age of technology and urbanization were causing a growing number of people to question traditional doctrines. There were efforts to "modernize" faith and to encourage greater church involvement in social issues.

Among the most dramatic changes taking place in religion in America during this decade, as well as subsequent decades, were those relating to the Roman Catholic Church—an almost endless litany of controversy and disruption. Catholics—particularly young adults—were dropping out and attending Mass less frequently, in considerable measure out of the belief that they could not oppose the Pope's edict on birth control and remain good Catholics. Priests were leaving, seminary enrollment was declining and parochial schools were closing.

Church membership, attendance, and the trend on the impor-

tance people place on religion were declining, not only among Catholics but among Protestants (particularly mainline church members) and Jews. Overall national attendance dropped from 49 percent in 1958 to 42 percent in 1969, with the decline most pronounced among young adults (21-29 years), down 15 points, and among Catholics, down 11 points between these two dates.

Survey evidence suggested that the much-heralded post-war resurgence of interest and involvement in religion had passed its peak. In 1962, 31 percent of Americans, as opposed to 14 percent in 1957, believed that religion was losing its influence on society. By the end of the decade this percentage had climbed to 70 percent.

Younger adults in the 1962 survey were far more inclined than older adults to take a pessimistic view of the influence of religion on American society—53 percent said religion was losing its influence.

The view that religion was on the wane was held to an even greater extent among persons attending college. The key reasons given were that student life reflected the trend toward secularization in American life with its emphasis on material rather than spiritual values; religion was unable to meet the challenge of science and the intellect; religion as a whole was failing to solve contemporary moral, social and economic problems; and students associated religion with churchgoing and church participation, which they found unnecessary for the fulfillment of life.

Some observers at the time, noting these trends among young people, viewed them as a clear warning signal to churches that they were not getting through to the current student generation and needed to make a sweeping reappraisal of their presentations.

In the 1960's the view was advanced in some theological circles that orthodox religion was outmoded and that it was no longer possible to believe in a Supreme Being—that "God is dead." Certainly some of the harsh and brutal aspects of society at the time—the growing crime rate and other evidence of the callous disregard for one's fellow—tended to support the view that God is dead and contributed to an uneasy feeling among the populace that basic religious beliefs were being eroded.

Yet for the American people as a whole, God appeared to be very much alive. Traditional religious beliefs generally held firm throughout this period. Large majorities, for example, continued to say they "strongly" believed in God and received a great deal of comfort and support from their beliefs. Most persisted in believing in a "personal" God who watches over humankind and can be reached by prayers rather than some impersonal force.

As the decade of the 1960's wore on, however, an ever-increasing number of Americans believed religion to be losing its influence on American life. In 1968, 67 percent said religion was losing ground, five times the proportion who felt this way a decade earlier. Those who held this view generally cited one of four reasons: (1) Young people were losing interest in formal religion, finding it not "relevant," (2) the growing crime, immorality and violence; (3) materialistic distractions; and (4) the church was not playing its proper role in society—some said the church was not keeping up with the times, but an equal number said it was too involved in current social and political issues.

1970's

The activism of the 1960's gave way to the disillusionment and cynicism of the 1970's. In fact, the early nineteen seventies might have marked one of the lowest points in national morale in history. Americans were growing more pessimistic about the economy, the prospects for peace in the world, the institutions of society and the future facing themselves and their families.

The Vietnam War had a devastating effect upon the public's regard for government, and with Watergate following closely on the end of the conflict in Southeast Asia, there was perhaps little wonder that surveys at the time showed respect for government at a low level both at the presidential and congressional levels. Vietnam indicated to many that government was unresponsive to the wishes of the people; Watergate, that people in high office had reached their positions by corrupt and illegal means.

At the same time, however, surveys offered no indication that Americans had lost faith in the American proposition or in the future of the nation.

The generally uneasy national mood, however, had a strong carryover effect upon the churches. Sociologists William McCready and the Rev. Andrew Greeley, in viewing societal changes and a new challenge to the Catholic church on the part of the rank-and-file, saw Catholic loyalty disappearing and worried about the future of the Church.

Pessimism also hit the Protestant churches, with mainline churches suffering serious membership losses, declines in church attendance, as well as losses in the proportions identifying with a particular denomination. Conservative churches, on the other hand, continued to experience growth, which was attributed, in part, to their having more clear-cut answers on religious issues as well as to greater efforts on the part of members in evangelization.

A Gallup survey conducted at the beginning of the 1970's showed three-fourths (75 percent) of Americans saying religion was losing its impact on society while only 14 percent said it was gaining, almost exactly reversed from 1957 when 14 percent said losing and 69 percent increasing. Key reasons given by survey respondents for the decline in religion's impact were that the church was outdated and not relevant in the world, morals were breaking down and people were becoming more materialistic.

Furthermore, as many as 58 percent of college students in a national Gallup survey at the time said religion was not a relevant part of their lives.

It was not a good time for organized religion; almost 4 in 10 young Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy (under 40 years old) in a 1971 Gallup survey said they had seriously considered leaving the religious life. The figure was even higher, 6 in 10, among Jewish rabbis.

But the survey offered little evidence that a weakening of faith was instrumental in the desire to leave the religious life. Many of the clergy blamed an inability to communicate with their parishioners, while others admitted they were confused about their roles and what was expected of them. Still others thought religion was irrelevant, while still another group said they felt they were in a straightjacket of rules and regulations.

Financial difficulties were frequently mentioned by Protestant

clergy as a consideration to leave the church, while a prominent reason given by Catholic priests—cited by roughly 1 in 5—was the desire to get married.

Two basic tenets of the Roman Catholic Church—strictures on birth control and priestly celibacy—were then being challenged by a large majority of young priests. In fact, 2 out of every 3 under age 40 expressed disapproval of their Church's ban on the use of artificial methods of birth control. Furthermore, nearly half of all young priests admitted to having counseled persons to use such methods.

But a generation gap was apparent, with 2 out of every 3 priests aged 40 and over saying they agreed with the Church's ruling on birth control. And fewer in this older group said they had counseled people to practice artificial birth control.

Catholic lay persons as well were found to oppose the Church's ban on birth control, with roughly 6 in 10 Catholics 40 and over, and 7 in 10 under 40, expressing opposition.

Nearly 8 in 10 priests under 40 said they would like to see the Church change its age-old ban on priests marrying, but a 56 percent majority of older Catholic clergy stood by the Church's position on the issue. (In their views on celibacy, Catholic laity sided with the younger priests.)

Two other basic Church teachings—the absolute authority of the Pope in matters of faith and morals and mandatory weekly attendance at Mass—were also being questioned by a sizable proportion of priests, with much of the opposition centered among the younger generation.

Much survey evidence from the early 1970's could be cited to show that religion had fallen on difficult days, but it is important to note that discontent among the clergy and laity at the time stemmed not from a weakening of religious convictions, but from a reluctance to accept certain aspects of institutionalized religion.

In fact, Americans were found to have held to basic beliefs since the beginning of scientific polling in the 1930's while rather sharp declines had occurred among Europeans since World War II. And while the mood of America during the 1970's was one of disillusionment, revealing a lack of confidence in key American institutions, confidence in the church or organized religion was higher than in seven other key institutions tested.

Between 1958, when 49 percent attended church in a typical week and the early 1970's, churchgoing declined by 9 percentage points. This decline traced almost entirely to falling attendance among Catholics. In 1973 the attendance figure for Catholics was 55 percent; a decade earlier the figure had been 71 percent.

The Evangelical Movement

The dramatic rise to political prominence of Jimmy Carter, a "born again" Christian, focused new attention on the evangelical movement in America. A well-publicized Gallup Poll finding in 1976 showed 34 percent of Americans saying they had been "born again"—that is, had had a turning point in their lives when they committed themselves to Jesus Christ. The percentage projected to nearly 50 million Americans, 18 and older. When the definition was narrowed to those who had been born again, held a literal interpretation of the Bible (or believed the Bible to be without error in its teachings) and had tried to encourage others to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour, the proportion of evangelicals was roughly one-fifth of the total adult population, a proportion which remained fairly constant in ensuing years.

Leveling Off Noted in 1976

Survey statistics in 1976 indicated that the decade and a half slide in religious involvement and interest was levelling off. A marginal upturn (to 42 percent) was recorded in weekly churchgoing. The proportion of Americans who said religion was increasing its influence on life in this country was growing and, in fact, was three times as high as in 1970. Furthermore, surveys showed that a surprising number of Americans were developing an interest in the inner or spiritual life. A projected 6 million persons were involved in Transcendental Meditation, 5 million in Yoga, 3 million in the charismatic movement, 3 million in mysticism, and 2 million in Eastern religions.

The "Youth Problem"

Many churches during the 1960's and 1970's became increasingly aware of their "youth problem." Traditionally churches had counted on winning back large numbers of young defectors when they reach their thirties, settle down and raise families. Survey findings indicated that a very high proportion did indeed return to the fold, but there was some indication they were doing so at a decreasing rate.

Many youth said the church was "not relevant" in the parlance of the day. But considerably larger proportions said they were losing interest in religion because they were not getting the answers they sought.

In the face of these warning signs, it was important for the clergy and religious educators to keep in mind three salient facts about youth: (1) the anti-establishment mood prevalent among students was directed at most major institutions as well as the church; (2) the levels of religious belief among young adults continued to be extremely high, despite their disenchantment with the forms of religion; indeed, they were manifesting new interest in discovering the meaning of life (e.g., the "Jesus cult," and interest in mysticism and meditation); and (3) young people were eager to serve others; a majority of college students reported that they had done at least some work among the poor and underprivileged.

Clergy and religious educators, therefore, perceived that one of the principal goals of organized religion was to try to link young people's will to believe with their desire to help others.

Decline in Belief in Europe

A 60-nation survey conducted in the mid-70's by Gallup International Research Institutes (GIRI) revealed that while in the U.S. belief remained high, belief levels had declined in most Western European nations since World War II.

In the United States, 56 percent said their religious beliefs were very important to them. By contrast, only 27 percent in Western Europe said their religious beliefs were very important. The only major nation in which the importance of religion exceeded the

United States was India. In India, 81 percent said their religious beliefs were very important to them.

Regarding specific religious beliefs, sharp declines had occurred in most Western European nations since 1948, when an earlier survey studied many of the same beliefs. At that time, 61 percent of Scandinavians said they believed in life after death; the figure from the 1976 study showed only 35 percent holding this belief. By contrast, in 1948, 68 percent of Americans reported they believed in life after death; in the 1976 survey the figure was 69 percent.

Similarly, in the case of the existence of God or a universal spirit, 94 percent of Americans professed belief compared to 89 percent in Canada, 88 percent in Italy, 78 percent in Western Europe and 38 percent in Japan.

The Scandinavian countries, among the developed nations, stood lowest in belief in God, excepting only Japan.

Belief in life after death also remained fairly constant among Americans after 1948, but in Canada there was a 34 percentage point drop in the proportion who believed. In the Benelux nations (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg) a 20 percentage point drop occurred and in the Scandinavian countries, a 26 point drop.

Nearly all people in the nations surveyed, however, reported identifying with a church or faith, and throughout the non-Communist world there was (and continues to be) widespread belief in the existence of God or a universal spirit. A majority in the free world also believed in life after death.

The 'Threat' of Cults

The Jonestown tragedy in 1978 contributed to the debate over what was widely regarded as the "threat" of cults. (A cult is generally defined as a religious group based on a substantially new revelation or insight, usually provided by a person believed to possess special knowledge. Cult members generally reject the rest of society, and the leader often has a personal magnetism that convinces his or her followers that he possesses supernatural qualities.)

For weeks after the grim developments on Nov. 18, historians, religious leaders, psychiatrists and others sought for motivations and asked "how could this have happened?" "Could it happen again?" Amid this speculation, the Gallup Poll sought to find out what Americans in all walks of life thought were the main reasons people became involved in cults of this kind. The key reasons given were "the need for leadership and a father figure," "unhappy lives and a feeling of hopelessness." Others cited the need for a deeper meaning to life as well as a failure of the nation's churches to answer spiritual needs.

While public concern over cults was at times intense, there was little evidence that any great numbers of Americans were being drawn into the ranks of cults. A NEWSWEEK ON CAMPUS poll later showed that 93 percent of college students felt there was "no chance" they might join such a group, while another 5 percent said "very little chance." Eighty-five percent believed the cults to be dangerous to their members but only 1 in 10 thought the cults seriously threatened mainstream religion.

Visit of Pope Paul II

The visit of Pope Paul II to the United States in 1979—the first visit of a Roman Catholic pontiff to these shores—gave a spiritual lift to the American people. A Gallup survey showed an overwhelmingly favorable response with people saying he brought new hope and faith to the populace.

In 1978 a major study, *The Unchurched American*, was conducted by The Gallup Organization and the Princeton Religion Research Center for *The Religious Coalition to Study The Backgrounds, Values and Interests of Unchurched Americans.* The *Religious, Coalition*, a group of 30 denominations and religious groups, was convened and coordinated through the *National Council of Churches of Christ, in the U.S.A.*. The study discovered that for many Americans *believing* was becoming increasingly divorced from *belonging*. The survey, however, offered encouraging findings for organized religion: Most of the "unchurched" remained "believers," with at least half saying they could see a situation that could bring them back into the active community of worshippers. And many of the unchurched claimed that religion remained very important in their lives.

Why were the unchurched resisting joining the community of active believers? One basic reason was, simply, that they had not been invited to do so. Another important reason why people rejected organized religion stemmed from the view that churches place too much emphasis on organizational rather than spiritual matters. Similarly, many Americans said they would consider returning to church if they could find a minister, pastor or rabbi with whom they could discuss their spiritual needs and religious doubts. Other factors included: lifestyle changes, the questioning of traditional values, and an emphasis in society on self-fulfillment.

The straying away from organized religion, the questioning of religious authority, coupled with the obvious gap between high levels of religiosity and observable reality—the high crime rate, the growing divorce rate, etc.—prompted some social observers to conclude that the nation was entering a post-Christian period of growing secularism and predicted a further decline in the relevance of religion in American life.

As the trends in the 1980's indicate, however, such predictions were premature.

1980's

The public mood of discouragement, noted during much of the 1970's, appears to have given way in the 1980's to a far more upbeat frame of mind, as economic optimism has grown and continues. Concern over the many problems confronting society —crime, unemployment, the nuclear threat, and others—remains, but Americans today appear to be far less apprehensive about the immediate future than they were in the previous decade. One of the key reasons is their conviction that, in the face of the sometimes sluggish response of government and institutions, they as individuals *can* make a difference. Indeed, voluntarism remains a strong force in America today.

The 1980 election victory of Ronald Reagan over Jimmy Carter that November was widely attributed to a national swing to a conservative point of view. President Reagan's victory in 1984 was credited in part, to a similar swing. Yet surveys show that

any movement to the "right" in America's political philosophy has been only slight.

One of the unique aspects of the 1980 presidential race was that all three of the leading contenders—Reagan, Carter and John Anderson—considered themselves "born again" Christians. On balance, being identified as an evangelical seemed to be more a political asset than a liability. Although most voters said it made no difference to them whether a candidate was an evangelical or non-evangelical, roughly twice as many voters said they would be more likely rather than less likely to vote for an evangelical.

Interestingly, the views of evangelicals and non-evangelicals were similar on a number of key voter issues—evangelicals were by no means monolithic in their views. However, on issues related to personal morality and religion—allowing homosexuals to teach in the public schools, banning abortion, and prayer in schools—major differences separated the views of evangelicals and non-evangelicals.

Debate over the division of Church and State was a prominent feature of the 1984 presidential campaign. The position of voters was fairly clear on this issue—they believed it was wrong for religious groups to work actively for the defeat of candidates who did not agree with their position on certain issues, but at the same time felt it was important for religious organizations to speak out on the moral implications of political issues.

The Moral Majority

During the 1980 and 1984 presidential years much attention was focused on the Moral Majority, the fundamentalist political movement founded by the Rev. Jerry Falwell. The Moral Majority, which in October of 1980 claimed it had registered 4 million new fundamentalist voters nationally, assigned candidates "morality ratings" according to their stand on issues ranging from abortion to SALT II. Some political observers later believed the Moral Majority to have been largely responsible for the defeat of certain key members of Congress in the 1980 election.

In a 1980 survey less than half (40 percent) had heard or read about the Moral Majority, while even fewer,—26 percent—were familiar with the objectives and goals of this organization. Among the latter "informed" group, disapproval (13 percent) was found to outweigh approval (8 percent) with 5 percent undecided.

A survey taken one year later found that public awareness of the Moral Majority had increased from 40 percent to 55 percent, but unfavorable attitudes continued to outweigh favorable views by about a 2-to-1 ratio.

Prayer in Schools

The issue of prayer in public schools made headlines during the 1980 elections, and has been a prominent issue throughout the 1980's. Since the U.S. Supreme Court's 1963 ruling that religious exercises in public schools were illegal, the courts consistently have struck down efforts to permit Bible reading and prayers in the nation's public schools. But the American people just as consistently have voted in favor of allowing religious observances in the schools.

While the public favored prayers in schools, the prevailing opinion among all groups and all faiths in the U.S. was that the home is more important than either the church or schools in the religious training of children.

Religious News *Is* News

During the 1980's the media have come increasingly to the realization that religious news *is* news and is of interest and importance to their audiences. Religion, for example, is no longer confined to the Saturday "religion page."

Another marked trend during recent years has been the growth in interest in survey research on the part of churches, stemming from the belief that surveys can be helpful in determining the effectiveness of ministries and in setting priorities for the future. Perhaps a deeper reason is the belief that the great problems of our time are religious and moral rather than political.

Religious Trends Remain Flat

The decade of the 1980's opened with church attendance and church membership levels remaining stable, as did the proportion of people (56 percent) who said religion is very important in their lives.

Despite the flatness in the trend in the *national* proportion who said they were church members, a comparison of membership figures in 1973 and 1983, supplied by the denominations themselves showed a *gain* in membership for evangelical churches but a *fall-off* among mainline churches, as seen in the following tables (from data collected for the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*):

Evangelical Churches

	1973	1983	Change
Southern Baptist Convention	12,295,400	14,185,454	Up 15%
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	2,569,000	3,593,000	Up 40%
Assemblies of God	1,099,606	1,879,000	Up 71%
Seventh-Day Adventists	464,276	623,563	Up 34%
Church of the Nazarene	417,732	507,574	Up 22%

Mainline Churches

	1973	1983	Change
United Methodist Church	10,192,265	9,405,083	Down 8%
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	3,715,301	3,157,372	Down 15%
Lutheran Church in America	3,017,778	2,925,655	Down 3%
Episcopal Church	2,917,165	2,794,139	Down 4%
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	1,330,747	1,156,458	Down 13%

The 'Crisis' in the Catholic Church

In the two decades since the end of Pope John XXIII's Second Vatican Council in 1965, upheavals in the Catholic world have

been almost commonplace, and the church has been in a state of flux due to a number of factors, including the following: the growth in the Hispanic population, political activism, the clergy shortage; new movements—an estimated 6 million Catholics are charismatics—healing, renewal and feminism.

Survey researcher William McCready, an expert on trends in the Catholic Church, noted (in USA TODAY) that the Catholic Church in America is "headed for a new era of diversity. Rather than one sort of American Catholic model, there will be several."

Russell Shaw (an executive with the Office of Public Affairs to the U.S. Catholic Conference) in *Our Sunday Visitor*, writes:

"Is it the same Church? The late, great Catholic apologist and writer, Frank Sheed, gave that title to one of his books. For Sheed, as for most serious people, the answer is yes. The Church *does* remain the same in essentials. Yet the changes have also been innumerable and drastic. The essentials of Catholic faith still stand, but the way Catholics experience their faith has changed enormously."

Despite the upheavals in the Catholic Church, the proportion of persons who describe themselves as Catholics is higher today than in the 1940's, although it should be borne in mind that some of those who affiliate themselves with the Catholic Church are, in fact, nominal Catholics. The latest Gallup findings on religious preference, based on a massive sampling in 1984, shows 28 percent of Americans today giving their religious preference as Roman Catholic. In the late 1940's, the proportion of U.S. Catholics was about one-third less—20 percent.

Factors that have swelled the ranks of Catholics over recent decades have been a higher birth rate and the influx of Hispanics.

Not only has the proportion of Catholics grown from the late 1940's, but the proportion who are "upscale" (i.e. in higher socioeconomic groups) is as high as the proportion of upscale Protestants for the first time in history.

Survey findings today suggest that Catholics, while disagreeing with certain of their Church's teachings and practices, feel better about themselves as Catholics. In the 1960's many Catholics left the Church because they felt they could not agree on certain issues—most notably, perhaps, the Church's stand on birth control—and still remain good Catholics. Today it would appear that they feel they can disagree on this and other issues and still be part of the Church.

Furthermore, Catholics have gained greater acceptability among the populace as a whole. There was a time not long ago when a Catholic had little chance of being elected president. This has all changed, of course. And far fewer Americans today than in earlier years object to interfaith marriages. We also note a dramatic drop in the percentage of Americans who cite incidents that have caused them to dislike Catholics.

While attendance at Mass among Catholics has held fairly firm during the last few years, the current level is, of course, far below that of the period prior to the early 1960's. A 1985 survey conducted for the *Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association* revealed that 60 percent of Catholics who have left the Church say they do not expect to return. Reasons cited for not rejoining the Church include an inability to accept some of the Church teachings, negative factors relating to priests, and finding the Catholic way of life too demanding.

The 'Electronic Church'

Much has been written in the 1970's and 1980's on the "electronic church" with the mainline Protestant denominations concerned that religious TV and radio was drawing members and money from local churches. But a 1984 survey conducted by the Annenberg School of Communications and The Gallup Organization found that when levels of religiosity and other factors are held constant, religious television viewing does not seem to be associated with lower levels of church attendance, volunteer work, or church contributions.

In view of these findings, denominational leaders of all faiths have added incentive to make full and creative use of the electronic media to inform and deepen the faith of the American people and to help overcome certain trends that threaten to undermine organized religion—the shockingly low level of Biblical knowledge, lack of spiritual discipline and superficial religious lifestyles.

Furthermore, it is maintained, the absence of the church's presence on a major scale from television and radio weakens the influence of the church in our society and permits people's lives to be conditioned almost totally by secular versions of reality. The real competition to organized religion, notes the Annenberg report, comes from general, not religious television.

The Religious Character of America

Certain basic themes emerge from the mass of survey data collected over the period of five decades—themes that probably apply not only to the 50-year history of scientific polling, but to the history of the nation:

- The widespread appeal or popularity of religion
- The gap between belief and commitment; between high religiosity and low ethics
- The glaring lack of knowledge
- What would appear to be a failure, in part, of organized religion to make a difference in society in terms of morality and ethics
- The superficiality of faith.

The last item is underscored by the survey finding that only about 1 person in 10 (according to the Gallup Spiritual Commitment Scale) falls into the category of "highly spiritually committed." Another 4 in 10 are in the moderately committed group, while half are either in the fairly low or very low commitment group.

Furthermore, a 1982 Gallup survey for the *Christian Broadcasting Network* found that while high levels of religious belief and activity are found in U.S. society, there is ample evidence of a self-centered kind of faith. The effect of reading the Bible, prayer and meditation, and religious radio and television shows is much more often stated in terms of "it makes me feel good" (although this is certainly a desirable effect) than in terms of making people realize the need for repentance or the need to do God's will regardless of the cost. And additional survey responses suggest that the religious-motivated behavior cited in the survey is more often in the nature of a passive "live and let live" kind of philosophy than in the nature of selfless and heroic action on behalf of others.

While these findings are unsettling and suggest the need for

churches to continue to stress the obligations of faith as well as the rewards, it is important to note that most Americans readily admit that they do not come close to following the teachings of Jesus Christ, and at the same time, want their faith to grow.

Religion Seen Playing Greater Role

A growing number of Americans perceive religion to be playing a greater role in society. At the same time, however, actual participation levels, as noted, have remained remarkably flat over a period of several years.

The proportion who see religion gaining in impact on society is now more than three times the proportion recorded in 1969 when 14 percent said religion was increasing its influence and 10 percent said losing.

When this index was started, in 1957, 69 percent saw religion gaining influence on American life while far fewer, 14 percent, said losing.

Comparison of the current findings with those in 1970, when only 1 in 7 said religion was increasing its influence, shows the change to have occurred more or less equally among men and women, the various age groups, and by Protestants and Catholics.

The uptrend in those saying religion is increasing its influence parallels a slight upturn in those who feel that religion can answer all or most of today's problems—from 56 percent in 1984 to 61 percent in the latest survey. The current figure, however, is 20 points lower than that recorded in the first measurement, in 1947, when 81 percent said religion could provide answers for contemporary problems.

But Involvement Has Remained Constant

Despite the slight upturns since 1984 in those who say religion is increasing its influence and those who believe religion can answer today's problems, little change has come about over the last five to 10 years—at least until now—in the proportions of Americans who state a religious preference, say they are members of a church or synagogue, attend church weekly, say religion is important in their lives, and who express confidence in organized religion.

Following are the latest findings on religious involvement and practice, as well as confidence in the church:

- Ninety-one percent of Americans currently state a religious preference - statistically the same as recorded regularly since the late 1970's.
- Sixty-eight percent say they are members of a church or synagogue - statistically unchanged from the mid-1970's.
- Forty percent of adults attend church or synagogue in a typical week, with little change since the mid-1960's.
- Fifty-six percent say religion is very important in their lives, representing little change over the last half-decade.
- Finally, the percentage who express a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the church or organized religion—65 percent in the latest survey—has remained remarkably flat over the last decade.

Signs of Renewed Interest

Although the basic religious involvement indicators—religious preference, church membership, churchgoing, and the like—have remained basically stable, there are clearcut signs of renewed interest in religion:

- An upturn is noted in participation in Bible study groups since 1978.
- New religious ferment is noted on the college campuses of the nation. Attendance in churches and synagogues on college campuses has increased over the last half-decade, as has the proportion of students who say religion is very important in their lives. Courses on religion are drawing record numbers.
- Americans want their faith to grow and religion to play a greater role in society.
- Half of the nation's adults (51 percent) say they are more interested in religious and spiritual matters than they were five years ago, according to a 1985 survey conducted for the *Christian Broadcasting Network, Inc.*, while 19 percent say less and 30 percent about the same.

Looking Ahead

What are the forces that are shaping religion in America as we move toward the turn of the century? Here are some of the more prominent trends being noted today:

- An intensive spiritual search and a continuing desire for inward and spiritual growth, coupled in some measure with a rejection of the authority of churches.

  William McKinney, reflecting upon the *Unchurched American* survey and subsequent surveys, comments: "There seems little question that, for the mainline churches, at least, individualism in religion reigns supreme. Questions of authority, discipline, community and order seem foreign."

  William McCready (as reported by Kenneth H. Briggs in the *New York Times*) sees a major change in the nation's religious character with Americans turning away from the dictates of organized religion and drawing upon spiritual feelings of their own to define their faith.

Other trends include:

- A proliferation of religious groups to answer spiritual needs.
- A growth in independent churches, reflecting a desire to be subject to local rather than national control.
- Demographic changes, with an increasingly older population likely, some observers believe, to increase church membership and attendance in the immediate years ahead.
- A blurring of boundaries between various faiths and denominations.
- The influence of charismatics and Pentecostals which is being felt across denominational lines.
- A growing interest in interdenominational and interfaith dialogue, although a continuing wide gap in understanding

and dialogue separates churches on the "left" and those on the "right."

- "A bottoming out" in the decline in the membership in the largest Protestant denominations and a continuing growth in the Evangelical churches, notably Southern Baptist.

- A continuing but less pronounced decline in the growth of the largest Protestant denominations but a growth and revitalization of the Evangelical churches, notably Southern Baptist.

- The rediscovery of the small group as a method for nurturing and multiplying believers. Father James H. Bacik wrote in the *National Catholic Reporter* (May, 1984): "A growing number of people are finding their deeper religious experiences in more intimate personal interaction with others who share their fundamental outlook and values." He continues: "This is not surprising in a society characterized by impersonal bureaucratic structures, an increasing intrusion of governmental controls into life and the proliferation of depersonalizing technologies."

- The "new activism." In a September 9, 1984 article in *The New York Times*, titled "Political Activism Reflects Churches' Search for a Role in Secular Society," Religion Editor Briggs writes about the efforts of churches to become a more potent social force:

"Armed with moral agendas, some conservative Christians who once felt excluded from the centers of political power are seeking to regain public backing for values they believe were wrongly stripped away by legislative and court action.

"At the same time, liberal Protestants, many of whom enjoyed close ties with official Washington in the past, are pushing a set of such issues as disarmament and improved social services that they consider neglected.

Roman Catholics, meanwhile, have found a new, independent voice through their bishops that is measuring United States nuclear arms strategy, domestic social programs and foreign policy in a more sharply critical manner.

"These developments stem from a common perception among Christian groups that the civil authorities no longer offer sufficient support for their beliefs and moral standards. Often their interests overlap as they separately seek to gain a stronger hearing in shaping public policy. The situation is urgent, they believe, because America is morally floundering and its values are up for grabs.

"The political activism is but one aspect of the churches' wider attempt to redefine themselves and their role in a more complex and secular culture."

The net impact of these forces will be felt in the immediate years ahead. Perhaps the most prominent trend at present is the intense search on the part of Americans—particularly young persons—for spiritual moorings in life.

What is prompting this search? One of the key factors is a need for hope in these troubled times of nuclear threat, a high crime rate, drug abuse, and other social problems. Accompanying this need, a note of desperation is sometimes found in the comments of survey respondents: Where else but to God does one turn in times like these?" Another factor is gnawing loneliness among Americans—greater loneliness, we find in surveys, than is found in many other nations—which is causing Americans urgently to seek supportive and dependable fellowship, and is reflected in the growth of small fellowship groups. Third, we find a disenchantment with modern lifestyles and with what is perceived to be a lack of rules and an anything-goes philosophy in society.

In a recent article in the *New York Times* ("America's Return to Prayer" Nov. 18, 1984), Religion Editor Briggs writes: "Spirituality is what people want...people are hungry for a direct relationship with God."

George Gallup, Jr. is President of the Gallup Poll, and Executive Director of the Princeton Religion Research Center. He holds a degree in religion from Princeton University and serves on the Advisory Council of Both the Religion and Sociology Departments of that institution. Mr. Gallup is on the Board of Directors of Religion in American Life, Inc. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Episcopal Radio-TV Foundation. He is on the Board of Directors of the Religion Research Association, Inc. and is President of the Living Church Associates. Mr. Gallup is also on the Board of Directors of the Laymen's National Bible Committee, Inc. In addition, Mr. Gallup is co-author with David Poling of *America's Search for Faith*, published by Abington in September, 1980; *My Kid on Drugs?* with Art Linkletter, Standard, 1981; *Adventures in Immortality* with William Proctor, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1982; and *Forecast 2000* with William Proctor, William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1984.

II
State of the Church
A. Religion and Society

Influence of Religion

Uptrend in Religion Increasing Influence

The percentage of Americans who say religion is increasing its influence on American life has grown sharply since 1970, with 48 percent holding this view compared to 39 percent who say religion is losing its impact.

Following is the question that has been asked in 17 surveys over the last three decades:

> *At the present time, do you think religion as a whole is increasing its influence on American life or losing its influence?*

Following is the trend with the proportion saying "the same" or "no opinion" excluded.

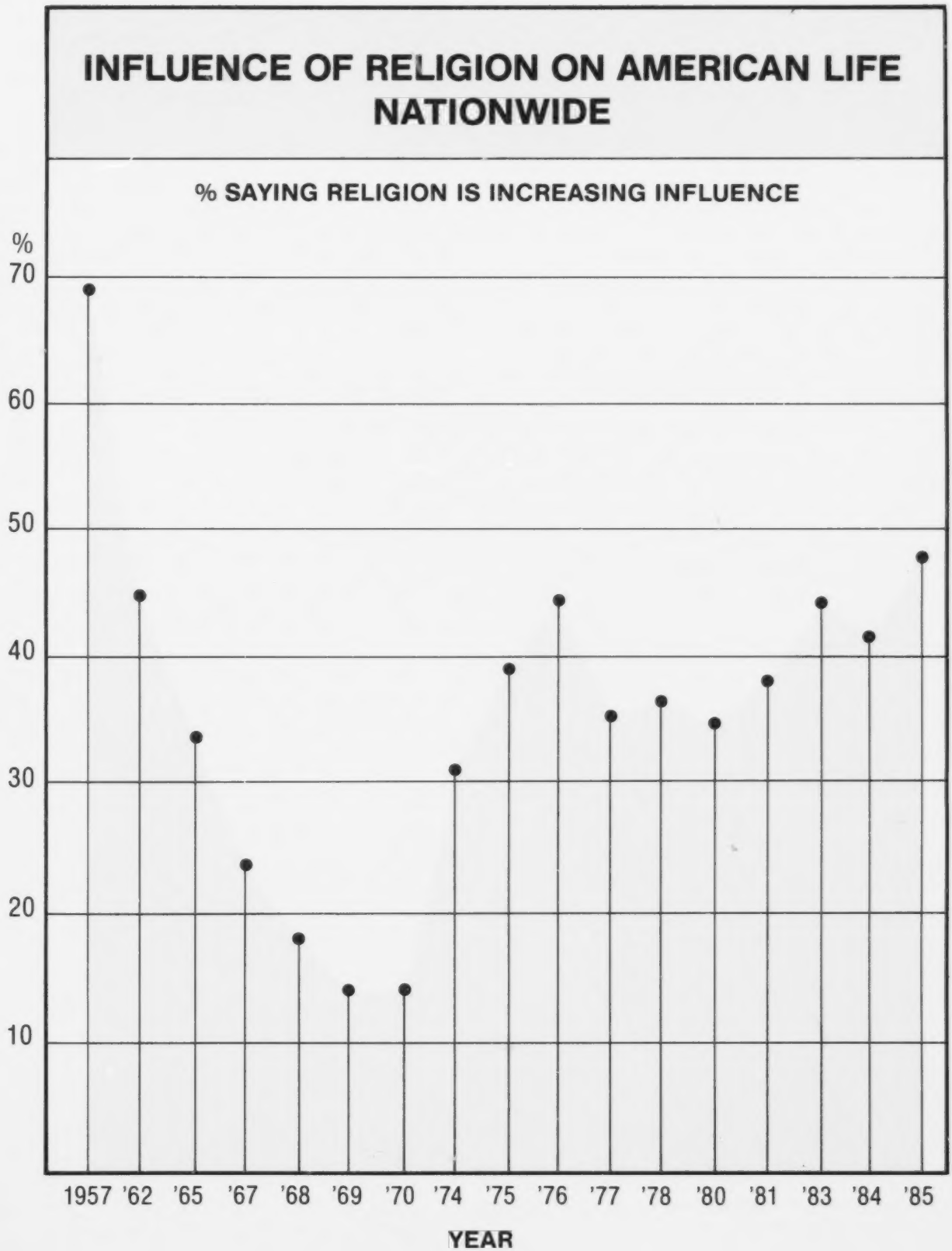
Influence of Religion on American Life

	Increasing	Losing
1985	48%	39%
1984	42	39
1983	44	42
1981	38	46
1980	35	46
1978	37	48
1977	36	45
1976	44	45
1975	39	51
1974	31	56
1970	14	75
1969	14	70
1968	18	67
1967	23	57
1965	33	45
1962	45	31
1957	69	14

In sharp contrast to today's findings, 75 percent of Americans in 1970 said religion was losing its impact while only 14 percent said it was gaining. As seen in the following table, perceptions differ little by key demographic groups in both the 1970 and 1985 surveys:

Percent Saying Religion Increasing Influence

	1970	1985	Point difference
NATIONAL	14%	48%	+34
Men	13	47	+34
Women	14	48	+34
18-29 years	14	49	+35
30-49 years	13	49	+36
50 and older	15	45	+30
Protestants	14	51	+37
Catholics	13	43	+30


INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON AMERICAN LIFE NATIONWIDE
% SAYING RELIGION IS INCREASING INFLUENCE
%
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
1957 '62 '65 '67 '68 '69 '70 '74 '75 '76 '77 '78 '80 '81 '83 '84 '85
YEAR

Religion and World Problems

61% Say Religion Can Answer All or Most of Today's Problems

Six in 10 Americans believe religion can answer all or most of today's problems while only one person in five clearly doubts the relevance of religion in the modern world.

In a Gallup Poll, 61 percent of the public say that religion can provide answers for contemporary problems, 22 percent feel it is "largely old-fashioned and out of date" and 17 percent do not express an opinion.

In each of the Gallup surveys in which this question has been asked, women, persons with less than a high school education and residents of the Midwest and South have been most apt to believe in religion's relevance.

Following is the question asked to determine the public's views on the relevance of religion to modern problems:

> *Do you believe that religion can answer all or most of today's problems, or that religion is largely old-fashioned and out of date?*

Here is a comparison of the latest findings with those recorded in the earlier surveys:

Can Religion Answer Problems?

	Can answer	Out of date	No opinion
1985	61%	22%	17%
1984	56	21	23
1982	60	22	18
1981	65	15	20
1974	62	20	18
1957	81	7	12

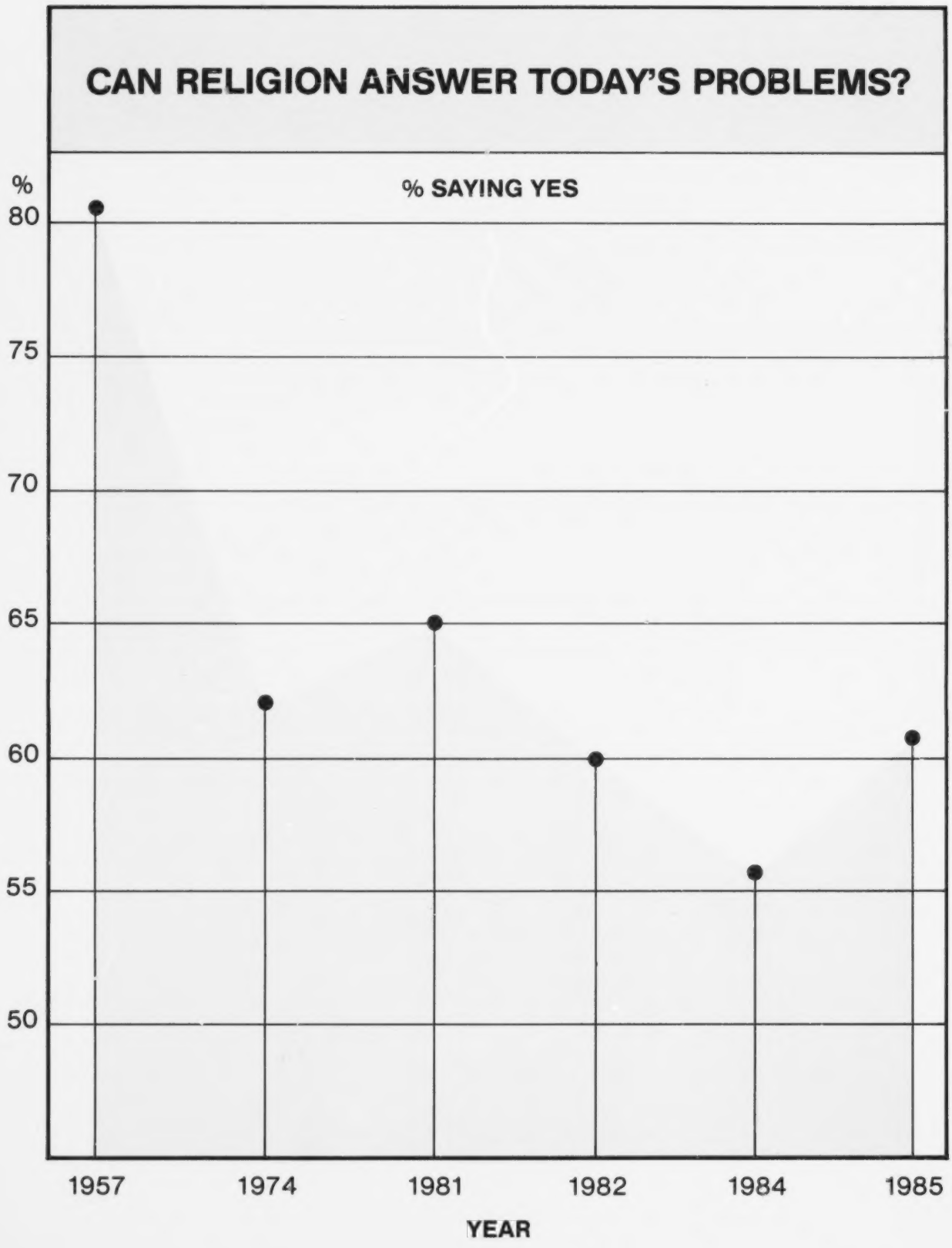
The following table compares the percentages in various population groups who currently believe religion can answer today's problems with the percentages who held this opinion in earlier surveys. The decline in persons saying religion can answer the problems of the world is most pronounced among Catholics, adults under the age of 49, and those with at least a high school education.

At the same time, however, a pronounced decline in persons who hold this view has come among all major groups.

Here's is the trend by groups:

Can Religion Answer Problems?
(Percent responding affirmatively)

	1957	1974	1981	1982	1984	1985
NATIONAL	81%	62%	65%	60%	56%	61%
18-29 years	84	55	58	58	52	62
30-49 years	80	64	60	58	55	59
50 and older	79	66	73	63	60	63
Protestants	83	70	72	71	66	70
Catholics	83	58	64	53	48	52
College education	78	52	57	53	53	55
High school	83	63	67	63	55	63
Grade school	79	73	73	63	64	66
Men	75	54	58	53	54	54
Women	86	70	71	66	59	67


CAN RELIGION ANSWER TODAY'S PROBLEMS?
% SAYING YES
%
80
75
70
65
60
55
50
1957
1974
1981
1982
1984
1985
YEAR

Confidence in Institutions

Confidence in Church is Highest

Today, as in six previous surveys conducted since 1973, more people express a higher degree of confidence in the church or organized religion than in any of the other institutions tested.

Two-thirds of survey respondents (64 percent) in a survey of 750 adults, 18 and older, conducted Oct. 10 - 16 for Newsweek by The Gallup Organization, express a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the church or organized religion. The proportion closely matches the proportion recorded in the previous six surveys. In 1983 the figure was 62 percent.

Next in the current ranking is the military (58 percent have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in this institution), followed by banks and banking and the U.S. Supreme Court, each with 51 percent. Then, the public schools (47 percent), newspapers (34 percent), organized labor (30 percent), the U.S. Congress and big business (each with 29 percent). At the bottom of the list is television, with 26 percent expressing a great deal or quite a lot of confidence.

Here is the question and highlights of the trend:

I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Would you please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one—a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little?

Confidence in Institutions
(Percent saying "great deal" or "quite a lot," combined)

	1984	1983	1981	1979	1977	1975	1973
Church or organized religion	64%	62%	64%	65%	64%	68%	66%
Military	58	53	50	54	57	58	NA
Banks and banking	51	51	46	60	NA	NA	NA
U.S. Supreme Court	51	52	46	45	46	49	44
Public schools	47	39	42	53	54	NA	58
Newspapers	34	38	35	51	NA	NA	39
Organized labor	30	26	28	36	39	38	30
Congress	29	28	29	34	40	40	42
Big business	29	28	20	32	33	34	26
Television	26	25	25	38	NA	NA	37

NOTE: NA = Not asked

The detailed responses show 41 percent saying they have a great deal of confidence in the church or organized religion, while 23 percent say quite a lot, 22 percent some, and 13 percent very little.

Among the groups expressing the highest degree of confidence in the church are women, older persons, southerners, and non-whites.

The following table shows the results by key population groups.

Confidence in Church or Organized Religion

	Great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very little	No opinion
NATIONAL	41%	23%	22%	13%	1%
Men	38	20	24	16	2
Women	45	24	20	9	2
18-29 years	33	26	28	13	*
30-49 years	37	22	25	15	1
50 & older	52	21	14	10	3
College graduates	42	22	25	11	*
College incomplete	32	20	28	19	1
High school graduates	40	25	21	12	2
Not H.S. graduates	50	20	16	12	2
East	41	24	23	11	1
Midwest	41	20	19	19	1
South	48	20	24	6	2
West	32	30	20	16	2
Whites	39	24	22	13	2
Non-whites	56	15	18	11	*

*Less than one percent.

B. Measurements of Religious Experience

Importance of Religion

56% say Religion 'Very Important'

The proportion of Americans who say religion is "very important" in their lives has been remarkably stable over the last five years, with 56 percent in 1984 surveys, compared to 55 percent in 1980, giving this response. Another 30 percent in the survey say "fairly important" while 13 percent answer "not very important."

The percent of Americans who said religion was very important in their lives plunged from 75 percent in 1952 to 52 percent in 1978, but has leveled out since then.

Most likely to say religion is very important in their lives, among the more than 9,000 Americans interviewed, are Protestants (62 percent), women (63 percent), those aged 50 and over (66 percent), Baptists (69 percent), persons with only a grade school background (71 percent), southerners (66 percent), and widows and widowers (72 percent).

Following is the question asked in each survey since 1952:

How important would you say religion is in your own life—very important, fairly important, or not very important?

Here is the trend:

Importance of Religion

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important
1984	56%	30%	13%
1983	56	30	13
1982	56	30	13
1981	56	29	14
1980	55	31	13
1978	52	32	14
1965	70	22	7
1952	75	20	5

Here are the results based on interviews from six in-person surveys conducted during 1984 and the results by religious preference, sex, and young adults (18-24):

Responses of Protestants

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important
1984	62%	29%	8%
1983	62	29	9
1980	61	30	8
1978	60	31	8
1965	74	20	5
1952	76	20	4

Responses of Catholics

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important
1984	53%	35%	11%
1983	56	34	9
1980	56	34	9
1978	51	36	11
1965	76	20	3
1952	83	14	3

Responses of Men

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important
1984	48%	34%	17%
1983	49	32	17
1980	48	34	17
1978	46	35	18
1965	63	26	10
1952	68	22	8

Responses of Women

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important
1984	63%	27%	9%
1983	62	28	9
1980	62	27	10
1978	58	29	11
1965	77	18	4
1952	79	18	3

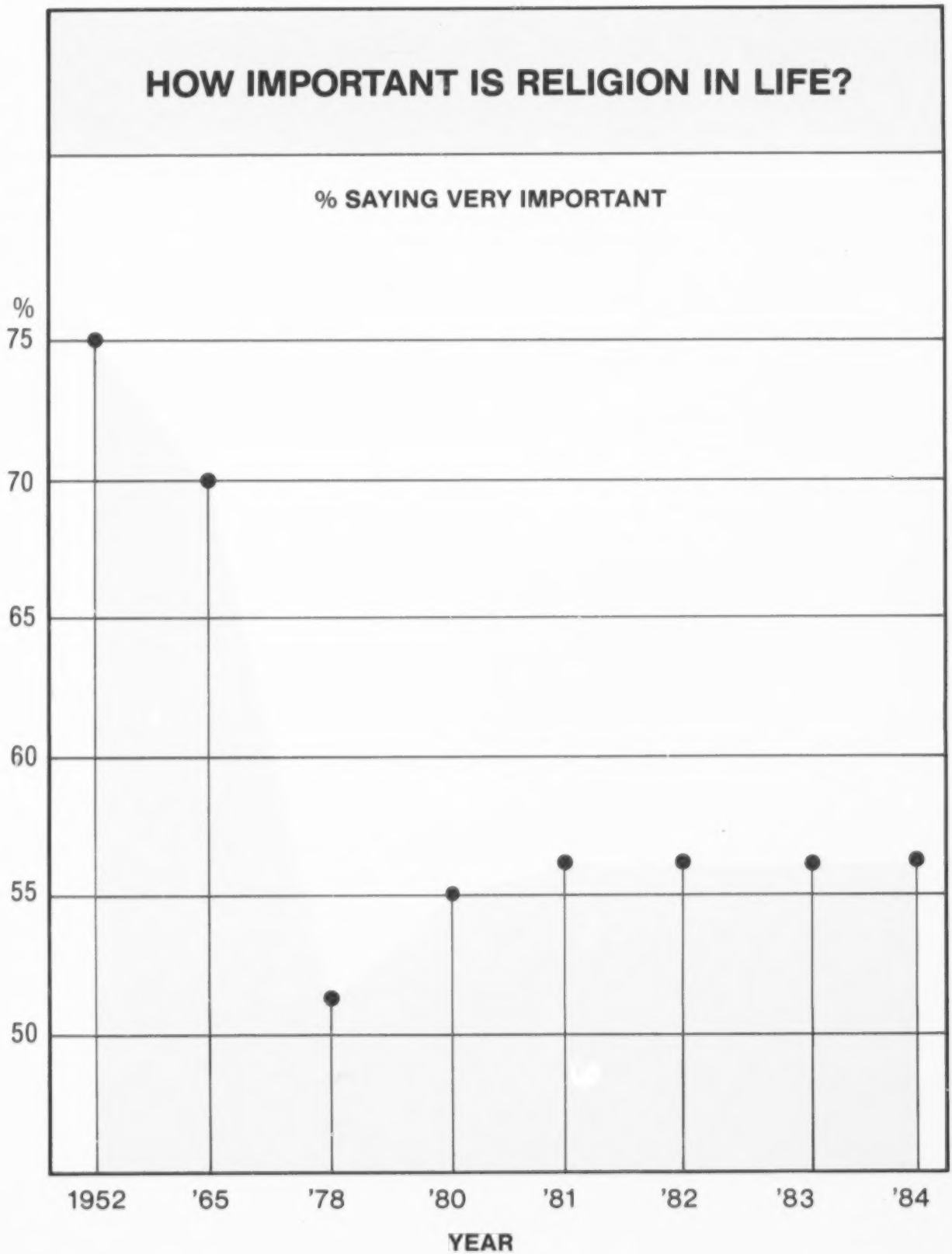
Responses of 18-24 Age Group

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important
1984	42%	39%	17%
1983	44	40	14
1980	43	40	14
1978	37	43	19
1965	57	32	10
1952	64	30	6

Responses of Protestant Denominations

	Baptists	Methodists	Lutherans	Presbyterians
1984	69%	55%	56%	53%
1983	69	56	55	55
1980	68	52	57	48
1965	82	65	66	71
1952	84	74	70	72

(The proportions having no opinion, 1% in the latest survey, are excluded.)


HOW IMPORTANT IS RELIGION IN LIFE?
% SAYING VERY IMPORTANT
%
75
70
65
60
55
50
1952
'65
'78
'80
'81
'82
'83
'84
YEAR

Spiritual Commitment

One-Tenth of Americans Seen as 'Highly Spiritually Committed'

One-tenth of Americans (10 percent) fall into the category of "highly spiritually committed" according to a scale developed by the Princeton Religion Research Center and included in a survey conducted for The Christian Broadcasting Network "24 Hours in the Religious and Spiritual Life of America."

The scale, a slightly expanded version of an earlier scale developed by the PRRC, measures the levels of spiritual commitment in U.S. society. Survey respondents were asked whether they feel each of nine statements is completely true, mostly true, mostly untrue, or completely untrue.

The scale does not include religious involvement or participation items, since these do not necessarily measure spiritual commitment, but determines the proportion of the adult population who say they believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ; believe God loves them; wish their religious faith were stronger; believe in the full authority of the Bible; try hard to put their religious beliefs into practice; receive comfort and support from their religious beliefs; seek God's will through prayer; say their religious faith is the most important influence in their lives; and, finally, say that they "sometimes do things they want very much NOT to do because they believe it is the will of God."

To be considered "highly spiritually committed," survey respondents must answer "completely true" to all nine statements. A total of 10 percent of the sample do so.

The results show a disproportionate number of women and persons with less than college training are "highly spiritually committed."

It is important to bear in mind that the findings refer only to those in the sample who give their broad religious preferences as Christian, since there are too few non-Christians to provide projectible data.

Here is the question asked in the 1984 survey for CBN, in which 1,610 adults were interviewed in person in more than 300 scientifically selected localities across the nation:

> *Please tell me for each of the following statements if you feel it is completely true, mostly true, mostly untrue or completely untrue?*

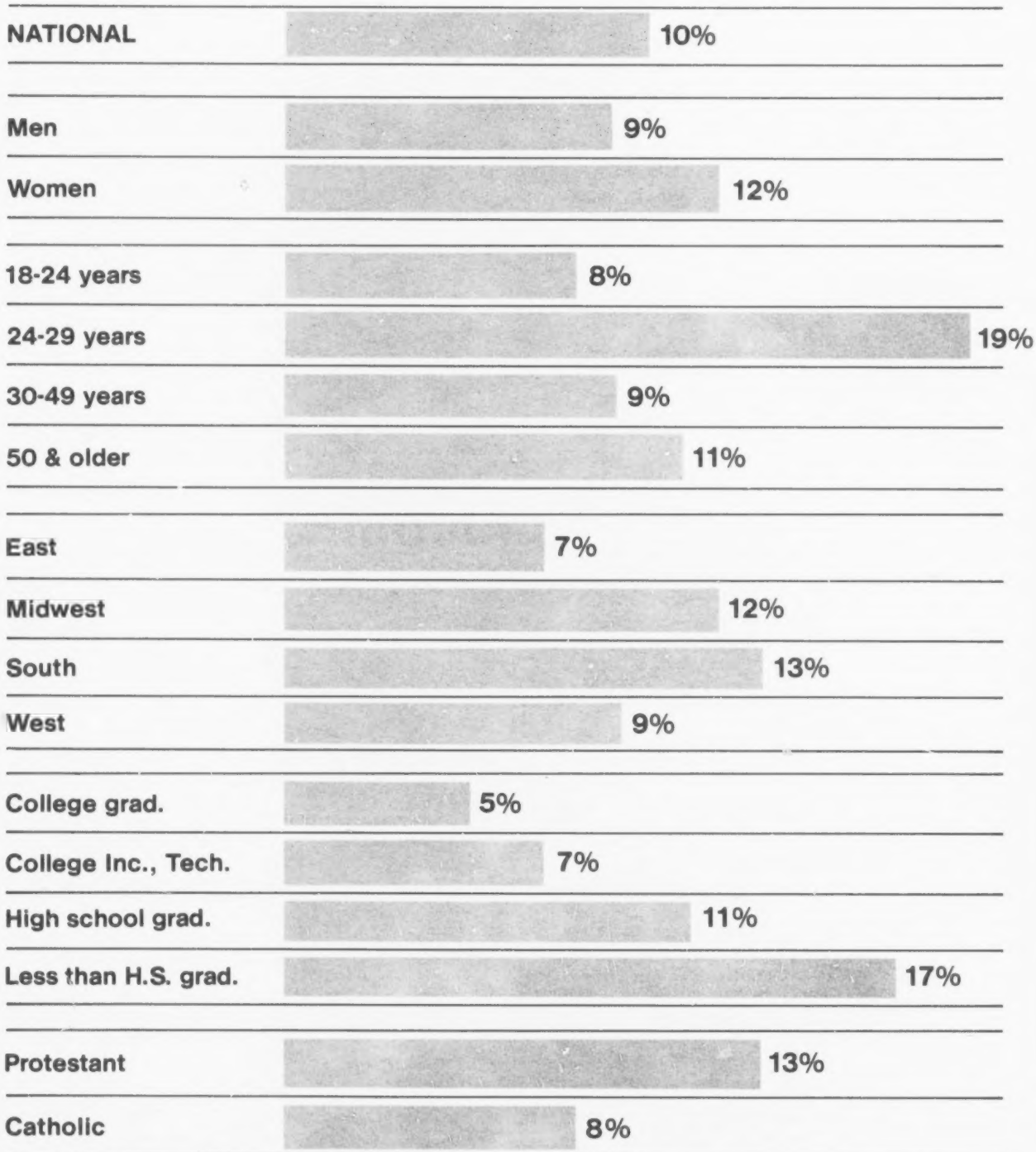
The national results are shown below.

SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT SCALE

	Completely true	Mostly true	Mostly untrue	Completely untrue	No opinion
I believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ	69%	19%	3%	5%	4%
I believe that God loves me even though I may not always please Him	68	21	3	4	4
I wish my religious faith were stronger	51	27	11	8	3
I believe in the full authority of the Bible	51	26	9	9	5
I try hard to put my religious beliefs into practice in my relations with all people, including people of different races, religious attitudes, and backgrounds	49	35	7	5	4
I receive a great deal of comfort and support from my religious beliefs	46	32	11	7	4
I constantly seek God's will through prayer	36	31	19	11	3
My religious faith is the most important influence in my life	34	38	17	8	3
I sometimes do things I want very much NOT to do because I believe it is the will of God	23	26	19	23	9

SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT

Respondents who said 'Completely True' to spiritual commitment statements.



C. Religious Identification

Religious Preference

Religious Preference: 1947 - 1984

Approximately nine in 10 in the latest surveys state a specific religious preference, with 57 percent saying they are Protestants, 28 percent Catholics, and 2 percent Jews. The remainder state a preference for another church or religion (4 percent) or no religious preference (9 percent).

Since 1947 the proportion of Catholics in the population has grown dramatically (from 20 percent in 1947 to 28 or 29 percent in recent years), while Protestants declined from 69 percent in 1947 to 57 percent today. The proportion of Jews has fallen from 5 percent in 1947 to 2 percent in the 70's and 80's. The proportion who give no religious preference has been on a gradual overall uptrend since 1967.

Results Based on 29,216 Interviews

Here are the results for 1984, based on in-person interviews with 29,216 adults, 18 and older, and the trend:

Trend in Religious Preference

—Yearly—

	Protest.	Cath.	Jewish	Other	None
1984	57%	28%	2%	4%	9%
1983	56	29	2	4	9
1982	57	29	2	4	8
1981	59	28	2	4	7
1980	61	28	2	2	7
1979	59	29	2	2	8
1977-78	60	29	2	1	8
1976	61	27	2	4	6
1975	62	27	2	4	6
1974	60	27	2	5	6
—By 5-year periods—					
1972	63	26	2	4	5
1967	67	25	3	3	2
1962	70	23	3	2	2
1957	66	26	3	1	3
1952	67	25	4	1	2
1947	69	20	5	1	6

Note: Results for some years do not add to 100% because of rounding.

Following are the latest religious preference results by key population groups:

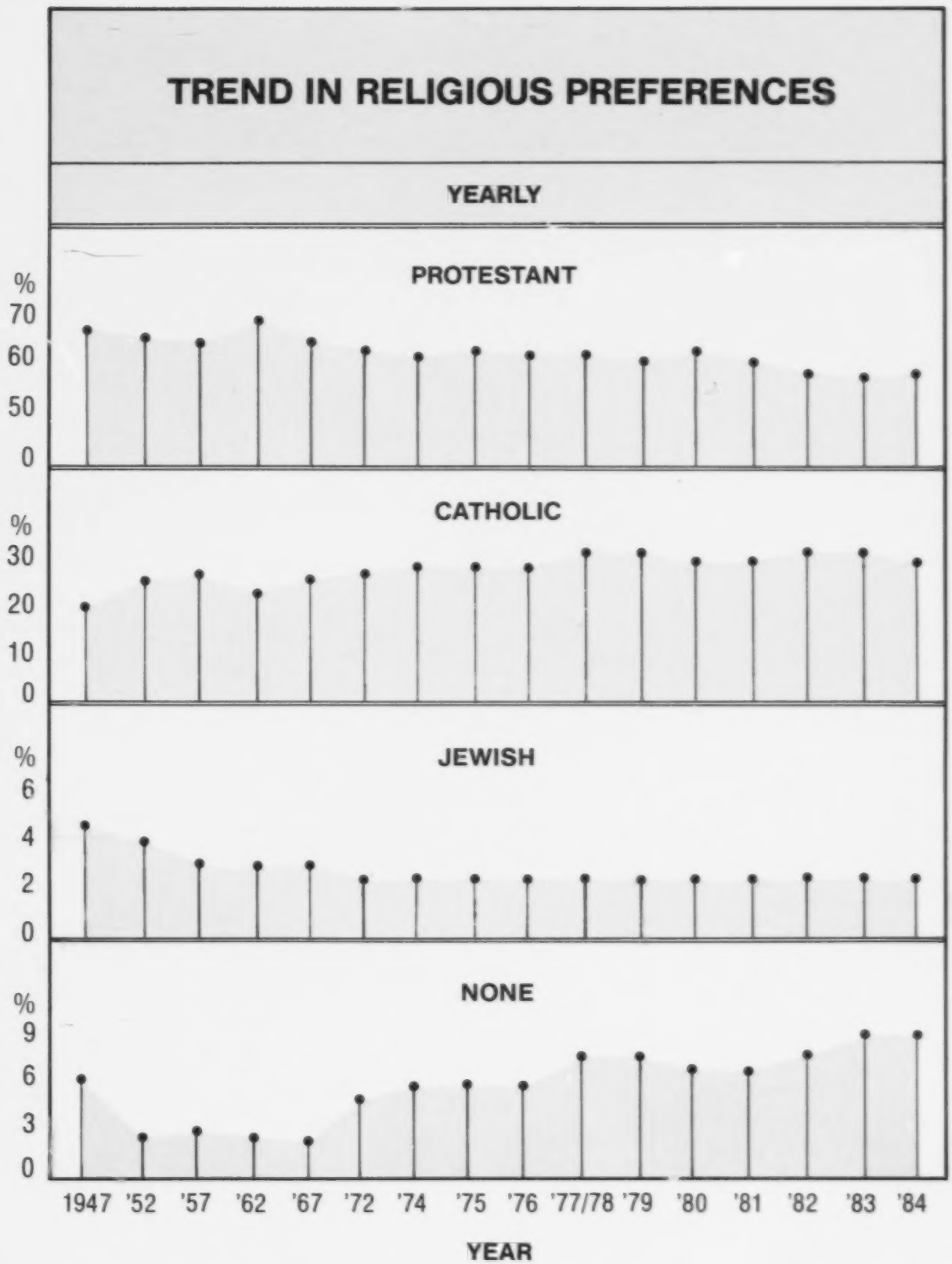
	Prot.	Cath.	Jewish	Other	None
NATIONAL	57%	28%	2%	4%	9%
18-24 years	52	30	2	5	11
25-29 years	50	30	2	5	13
30-49 years	56	28	3	4	9
50-64 years	62	28	3	2	5
65 and older	66	24	3	2	5
Men	55	27	3	3	12
Women	59	28	2	4	7
East	40	44	6	3	7
Midwest	63	26	1	2	8
South	74	16	1	2	7
West	48	26	2	10	14
Whites	55	29	3	4	9
Blacks	82	7	*	3	8
Hispanics	18	70	*	2	10
College grads.	53	26	6	3	12
College inc.	55	28	3	4	10
H.S. grads.	61	27	1	3	8
Not H.S. grads.	62	28	*	3	7

*Less than 1%.

Trend in Protestant Church Preference

	Baptist	Metho-dist	Luth-eran	Presby-terian	Episco-palian
1984	20%	9%	7%	2%	3%
1983	21	10	7	3	2
1982	19	10	6	4	2
1981	19	10	6	4	2
1980	19	10	6	4	2
1979	19	11	6	4	2
1978	19	11	6	4	2
1976	21	11	7	5	3
1975	20	11	7	5	3
1974	21	14	7	6	3
1969	20	14	7	6	3
1967	21	14	7	6	3

Note: It should be borne in mind tht many of those who state a religious preference may not be formally affiliated with any religious body.


TREND IN RELIGIOUS PREFERENCES
YEARLY
PROTESTANT
%
70
60
50
0
CATHOLIC
%
30
20
10
0
JEWISH
%
6
4
2
0
NONE
%
9
6
3
0
1947 '52 '57 '62 '67 '72 '74 '75 '76 '77/78 '79 '80 '81 '82 '83 '84
YEAR

Protestant and Other Church Preference

(Based on 17 National Surveys in 1984)

	NATIONAL
Baptist Churches	20%
Southern Baptist Convention	9
American Baptist Churches	2
The National Baptist Convention of America	1
The National Baptist Convention of U.S.A., Inc.	*
Other Baptist	3
Baptist, don't know which denomination	5
Methodist Churches	9
United Methodist Church	7
A.M.E. Zion Church	*
A.M.E. Church	*
Other Methodist	1
Methodist, don't know which denomination	1
Lutheran Churches	7
American Lutheran Church	2
Lutheran Church in America	1
Missouri Synod Lutheran	2
Other Lutheran	1
Lutheran, don't know which denomination	1
Presbyterian Churches	2
Episcopal Churches	3
United Church of Christ, (or Congregationalist or Evangelical and Reformed)	2
Other Protestant	2
Protestant unspecified	5
Other religion	2
TOTAL PROTESTANT:	57%

*Less than one percent.

NOTE: In reading the tables, it should be borne in mind that the respondents themselves designated their denominations. Therefore, Southern Baptists may be confused with Baptists who live in the South but do not belong to the Southern Baptist Convention, and it is likely that some survey respondents in the South and West who belong to the Church of Christ identified themselves with the *United* Church of Christ.

Religious Preference: Major Faiths

Question: *What is your religious preference—Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?*

	January-December, 1984				
	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	No religious preference	Number of interviews
NATIONAL	**57%**	**28%**	**2%**	**9%**	**29,216**
SEX					
Men	55	27	3	11	14,465
Women	59	28	2	6	14,751
AGE					
Total under 30	51	30	2	12	6,257
18-24 years	52	30	2	12	3,163
25-29 years	50	30	2	13	3,094
30-49 years	56	28	3	9	10,884
Total 50 & older	63	26	3	4	11,968
50-64 years	62	28	3	4	6,400
65 & older	66	24	3	4	5,568
REGION					
East	40	44	6	7	7,490
Midwest	63	26	1	7	7,691
South	74	16	1	7	8,347
West	48	26	2	13	5,688
RACE					
Whites	55	30	3	8	25,466
Non-whites	72	14	*	9	3,750
Blacks	82	7	*	7	3,131
Hispanics	18	70	*	9	1,492
EDUCATION					
College graduates	53	26	6	11	5,883
College incomplete	55	28	3	9	7,163
High school graduates	59	29	2	6	9,751
Less than H.S. grads.	61	27	1	7	6,365
POLITICS					
Republicans	64	24	1	5	8,513
Democrats	56	30	4	7	11,225
Independents	55	28	2	11	8,609
OCCUPATION					
Professional & business	53	28	4	9	8,644
Clerical & sales	56	29	2	9	1,934
Manual workers	57	29	1	8	10,208
Non-labor force	64	25	3	5	6,197
INCOME					
$40,000 & over	52	31	5	8	4,759
$30,000-$39,999	54	31	3	8	3,472
$20,000-$29,999	56	29	2	8	5,567
$10,000-$19,999	60	26	2	8	8,340
Under $10,000	62	24	1	8	5,474
LABOR UNION					
Labor union families	53	34	2	7	5,773
Non-labor union families	58	27	3	8	23,443

*Less than one percent.

Religious Preference: Protestant Denominations

Question: *What is your religious preference—Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?* (If Protestant, the respondent is asked): *What specific denomination or faith is that?*

	January-December, 1984					
	Total Baptist	Southern Baptist	American Baptist	Total Methodist	United Methodist	Number of interviews
NATIONAL	**20%**	**9%**	**2%**	**9%**	**7%**	**29,216**
SEX						
Men	19	9	2	9	7	14,465
Women	20	9	3	10	8	14,751
AGE						
Total under 30	20	8	3	6	5	6,257
18-24 years	22	8	3	6	5	3,163
25-29 years	19	8	3	7	5	3,094
30-49 years	19	9	2	9	7	10,884
Total 50 & older	19	10	2	12	9	11,968
50-64 years	19	9	2	11	8	6,400
65 & older	20	10	2	14	11	5,568
REGION						
East	10	2	3	8	6	7,490
Midwest	14	3	3	12	10	7,691
South	39	24	2	11	8	8,347
West	10	3	1	6	4	5,688
RACE						
Whites	16	8	2	10	8	25,466
Non-whites	48	16	9	8	2	3,750
Blacks	57	19	11	9	2	3,131
Hispanics	4	2	1	1	1	1,492
EDUCATION						
College graduates	10	5	2	10	8	5,883
College incomplete	16	8	2	9	7	7,163
High school graduates	21	9	3	10	8	9,751
Less than H.S. grads.	21	9	3	10	8	6,365
POLITICS						
Republicans	16	8	2	12	10	8,513
Democrats	25	11	4	9	6	11,225
Independents	16	8	2	9	7	8,609
OCCUPATION						
Professional & business	13	7	2	10	8	8,644
Clerical & sales	19	9	2	8	6	1,934
Manual workers	23	10	3	8	6	10,208
Non-labor force	22	11	3	12	9	6,197
INCOME						
$40,000 & over	12	7	1	10	8	4,759
$30,000-$39,999	14	8	2	9	7	3,472
$20,000-$29,999	18	8	2	10	8	5,567
$10,000-$19,999	23	10	3	9	7	8,340
Under $10,000	27	11	4	10	6	5,474
LABOR UNION						
Labor union families	17	7	3	8	6	5,773
Non-labor union families	20	10	2	10	8	23,443

Religious Preference: Protestant Denominations

Question: *What is your religious preference—Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?* (If Protestant, the respondent is asked): *What specific denomination or faith is that?*

	January-December, 1984					
	Total Baptist	Methodist	Lutheran	Presbyterian	Episcopal	Number of interviews
NATIONAL	**20%**	**9%**	**7%**	**2%**	**3%**	**29,216**
SEX						
Men	19	9	6	2	2	14,465
Women	20	10	7	2	3	14,751
AGE						
Total under 30	20	6	5	2	2	6,257
18-24 years	22	6	5	2	2	3,163
25-29 years	19	7	6	2	1	3,094
30-49 years	19	9	7	2	3	10,884
Total 50 & older	19	12	7	3	3	11,968
50-64 years	19	11	7	3	3	6,400
65 & older	20	14	7	3	3	5,568
REGION						
East	10	8	5	2	3	7,490
Midwest	14	12	14	2	2	7,691
South	39	11	2	2	2	8,347
West	10	6	6	3	3	5,688
RACE						
Whites	16	10	7	2	3	25,466
Non-whites	48	8	1	1	1	3,750
Blacks	57	9	1	1	1	3,131
Hispanics	4	1	1	1	1	1,492
EDUCATION						
College graduates	10	10	7	4	5	5,883
College incomplete	16	9	7	3	3	7,163
High school graduates	21	10	7	2	2	9,751
Less than H.S. grads.	29	8	5	1	1	6,365
POLITICS						
Republicans	16	12	8	4	4	8,513
Democrats	25	9	5	1	2	11,225
Independents	16	9	7	2	2	8,609
OCCUPATION						
Professional & business	13	10	7	3	4	8,644
Clerical & sales	19	8	7	3	2	1,934
Manual workers	23	8	6	1	1	10,208
Non-labor force	22	12	7	3	3	6,197
INCOME						
$40,000 & over	12	10	7	3	5	4,759
$30,000-$39,999	14	9	9	3	2	3,472
$20,000-$29,999	18	10	8	2	3	5,567
$10,000-$19,999	23	9	6	2	2	8,340
Under $10,000	27	10	5	2	1	5,474
LABOR UNION						
Labor union families	17	8	7	2	2	5,773
Non-labor union families	20	10	6	2	3	23,443

Religious Preference: Protestant Denominations

Question: *What is your religious preference—Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?* (If Protestant, the respondent is asked): *What specific denomination or faith is that?*

	January-December, 1984					
	Total Lutheran	American Lutheran	Missouri Synod Lutheran	United Church of Christ	Christian Church	Number of interviews
NATIONAL	**7%**	**2%**	**2%**	**2%**	**2%**	**29,216**
SEX						
Men	6	2	1	2	2	14,465
Women	7	2	2	2	2	14,751
AGE						
Total under 30	5	1	1	1	3	6,257
18-24 years	5	1	1	1	3	3,163
25-29 years	6	2	1	1	2	3,094
30-49 years	7	2	2	2	2	10,884
Total 50 & older	7	2	2	3	2	11,968
50-64 years	7	2	2	2	2	6,400
65 & older	7	2	2	3	3	5,568
REGION						
East	5	1	1	2	1	7,490
Midwest	14	4	4	2	3	7,691
South	2	1	*	2	2	8,347
West	6	2	1	1	3	5,688
RACE						
Whites	7	2	2	2	2	25,466
Non-whites	1	*	*	1	2	3,750
Blacks	1	*	*	1	1	3,131
Hispanics	1	*	*	1	1	1,492
EDUCATION						
College graduates	7	2	2	2	1	5,883
College incomplete	7	2	2	2	2	7,163
High school graduates	7	2	2	2	2	9,751
Less than H.S. grads.	5	1	1	2	2	6,365
POLITICS						
Republicans	8	2	3	2	2	8,513
Democrats	5	1	1	2	2	11,225
Independents	7	2	2	2	2	8,609
OCCUPATION						
Professional & business	7	2	2	2	2	8,644
Clerical & sales	7	2	2	2	2	1,934
Manual workers	6	2	2	2	2	10,208
Non-labor force	7	2	2	3	2	6,197
INCOME						
$40,000 & over	7	2	2	2	2	4,759
$30,000-$39,999	9	2	2	2	2	3,472
$20,000-$29,999	8	2	2	2	2	5,567
$10,000-$19,999	6	2	2	2	2	8,340
Under $10,000	5	1	1	2	2	5,474
LABOR UNION						
Labor union families	7	2	2	2	2	5,773
Non-labor union families	6	2	2	2	2	23,443

*Less than one percent.

Profiles of Major Faiths

Question: *What is your religious preference—Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?*

	January-December, 1984				
	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	Other	None
NATIONAL	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
SEX					
Men	46	47	50	49	63
Women	54	53	50	51	37
AGE					
Total under 30	24	29	21	34	39
18-24 years	14	17	11	17	21
25-29 years	10	12	10	17	18
30-49 years	35	36	38	43	40
Total 50 & older	41	35	41	23	21
50-64 years	22	20	22	14	11
65 & older	19	15	19	9	10
REGION					
East	18	41	61	23	22
Midwest	28	24	14	21	21
South	38	17	12	26	25
West	16	18	13	30	32
RACE					
Whites	85	94	99	74	87
Non-whites	15	6	1	26	13
Blacks	14	3	*	15	9
Hispanics	2	14	*	4	6
EDUCATION					
College graduates	17	17	42	23	24
College incomplete	22	24	26	29	26
High school graduates	36	36	25	27	28
Less than H.S. grads.	25	23	7	21	22
POLITICS					
Republicans	32	25	14	23	19
Democrats	37	41	55	34	34
Independents	29	30	29	34	39
OCCUPATION					
Professional & business	27	30	53	34	33
Clerical & sales	7	7	7	7	7
Manual workers	37	39	13	39	39
Non-labor force	21	17	22	13	13
INCOME					
$40,000 & over	14	17	34	14	14
$30,000-$39,999	11	13	13	10	12
$20,000-$29,999	19	20	15	22	19
$10,000-$19,999	30	27	22	30	29
Under $10,000					
LABOR UNION					
Labor union families	18	23	16	20	17
Non-labor union families	82	77	84	80	83

*Less than one percent.

Profiles of Protestant Denominations

Question: *What is your religious preference—Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?* (If Protestant, the respondent is asked): *What specific denomination or faith is that?*

	January-December, 1984				
	All Baptists	Methodist	Lutheran	Presbyterian	Episcopalian
NATIONAL	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
SEX					
Men	47	46	46	42	47
Women	53	54	54	58	53
AGE					
Total under 30	28	18	22	18	18
18-24 years	17	10	11	9	12
25-29 years	11	8	11	9	6
30-49 years	35	33	37	33	37
Total 50 & older	37	48	41	48	46
50-64 years	19	24	23	25	27
65 & older	17	25	18	23	19
REGION					
East	12	21	18	23	32
Midwest	19	32	55	23	16
South	59	35	9	31	29
West	10	12	18	23	22
RACE					
Whites	70	90	99	96	96
Non-whites	30	10	1	4	4
Blacks	29	9	1	3	4
Hispanics	1	1	1	1	3
EDUCATION					
College graduates	9	19	19	30	39
College incomplete	19	23	25	29	29
High school graduates	37	37	38	29	24
Less than H.S. grads.	35	20	18	12	8
POLITICS					
Republicans	24	36	37	47	43
Democrats	49	35	28	24	25
Independents	25	27	33	28	29
OCCUPATION					
Professional & business	20	30	31	42	50
Clerical & sales	7	6	7	8	6
Manual workers	44	31	33	21	20
Non-labor force	21	25	19	23	21
INCOME					
$40,000 & over	9	16	16	23	29
$30,000-$39,999	9	11	15	14	11
$20,000-$29,999	17	20	22	17	20
$10,000-$19,999	33	28	28	24	20
Under $10,000					
LABOR UNION					
Labor union families	17	17	21	13	13
Non-labor union families	83	83	79	87	87

Profiles of Protestant Denominations

Question: *What is your religious preference—Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?* (If Protestant, the respondent is asked): *What specific denomination or faith is that?*

	January-December, 1984				
	All Baptist	Southern Baptist	American Baptist	All Methodist	United Methodist
NATIONAL	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
SEX					
Men	47	48	45	46	45
Women	53	52	55	54	55
AGE					
Total under 30	28	24	35	18	18
18-24 years	17	14	20	10	10
25-29 years	11	10	15	8	8
30-49 years	35	35	36	33	34
Total 50 & older	37	40	29	48	48
50-64 years	19	21	15	24	23
65 & older	17	20	14	25	24
REGION					
East	12	5	35	21	22
Midwest	19	9	28	32	35
South	59	80	26	35	32
West	10	6	12	12	10
RACE					
Whites	70	79	54	90	97
Non-whites	30	21	46	10	3
Blacks	29	21	45	9	4
Hispanics	1	2	1	1	1
EDUCATION					
College graduates	9	10	11	19	21
College incomplete	19	20	18	23	23
High school graduates	37	36	41	37	38
Less than H.S. grads.	35	34	30	20	18
POLITICS					
Republicans	24	25	21	36	39
Democrats	49	47	54	35	31
Independents	25	26	21	27	29
OCCUPATION					
Professional & business	20	22	18	30	31
Clerical & sales	7	7	6	6	6
Manual workers	44	42	46	31	29
Non-labor force	21	22	21	25	24
INCOME					
$40,000 & over	9	11	8	16	17
$30,000-$39,999	9	10	7	11	11
$20,000-$29,999	17	17	18	20	20
$10,000-$19,999	33	33	34	28	29
Under $10,000					
LABOR UNION					
Labor union families	17	14	20	17	16
Non-labor union families	83	86	80	83	84

Profiles of Protestant Denominations

Question: *What is your religious preference—Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?* (If Protestant, the respondent is asked): *What specific denomination or faith is that?*

	January-December, 1984				
	All Lutherans	American Lutheran	Missouri synod Lutheran	United Church of Christ	Christian Church
NATIONAL	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
SEX					
Men	46	45	40	44	43
Women	54	55	60	57	57
AGE					
Total under 30	22	22	16	20	32
18-24 years	11	12	8	12	22
25-29 years	11	10	8	8	10
30-49 years	37	36	39	31	29
Total 50 & older	41	43	44	49	39
50-64 years	23	24	24	23	19
65 & older	18	19	20	26	20
REGION					
East	18	12	12	28	7
Midwest	55	63	65	29	41
South	9	8	8	29	26
West	18	18	15	15	26
RACE					
Whites	99	99	99	94	91
Non-whites	1	2	1	6	9
Blacks	1	1	*	6	7
Hispanics	1	1	1	1	4
EDUCATION					
College graduates	19	20	18	22	12
College incomplete	25	23	24	20	25
High school graduates	38	37	39	35	40
Less than H.S. grads.	18	20	19	23	22
POLITICS					
Republicans	37	36	46	35	32
Democrats	28	29	22	30	34
Independents	33	32	31	33	32
OCCUPATION					
Professional & business	31	30	34	26	24
Clerical & sales	7	9	6	6	8
Manual workers	33	31	32	33	40
Non-labor force	19	19	19	28	22
INCOME					
$40,000 & over	16	14	19	15	14
$30,000-$39,999	15	14	15	12	10
$20,000-$29,999	22	22	22	17	19
$10,000-$19,999	28	32	29	29	31
Under $10,000					
LABOR UNION					
Labor union families	21	21	19	16	16
Non-labor union families	79	79	81	84	84

*Less than one percent.

Evangelicals

22% are Evangelicals— 35 Million Adults

In the latest 1984 survey, 22 percent of adults are found to be evangelicals, representing a slight increase since 1981 when the figure was 17 percent.

Definition of Evangelicals

Evangelicals in each survey are defined as those with three basic characteristics: (1) they describe themselves as "born-again Christians" or say they have had a "born-again" experience; (2) they have encouraged other people to believe in Jesus Christ; and (3) they believe in a literal interpretation of the Bible. (This is a fairly rigorous definition, because some evangelicals do not hold to a literal *interpretation* of the Bible, although they accept the absolute *authority* of the Bible.)

The current percentage (22 percent) projects to approximately 35 million adults.

Questions and National Results

Following are the questions and the national results:

Would you say that you have been born again or have had a born-again experience—that is, a turning point in your life when you committed yourself to Jesus Christ?

Percent 'Born Again'

1984	40%
1983	35
1981	35
1980	38
1976	34

Have you ever tried to encourage someone to believe in Jesus Christ or to accept Him as his or her Saviour?

Encouraged Someone To Accept Jesus Christ

1984	48%
1983	50
1981	53
1980	44
1976	47

Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible? (Respondents were shown a card with the following statements:)

- The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word.
- The Bible is the inspired word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally, word for word.
- The Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by men.

Hold Literal View of Bible

1984	37%
1983	39
1981	37
1980	39
1976	38

The following table shows the trend in the percentage meeting all three criteria:

'Evangelicals'
(Percent Meeting All 3 Criteria)

1984	22%
1983	20
1981	17
1980	19
1976	18

D. Religious Practices

Church Membership

7 in 10 are Church Members

Seven in 10 U.S. adults say they are members of a church or synagogue.

The proportion of adult church or synagogue members declined in the three-decade period between 1947 and 1978. Over the last six years, however, the percentage has leveled out.

It is important to bear in mind that the membership figures reported here are *self-classifications*, representing the proportions of people who say they are members of a church or synagogue, and thus may include some who are not actually on the rolls of a local church. It should also be stressed that adherents of certain churches—for example, the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches—are considered members at birth.

Results Based on 5 Surveys

The 1984 membership figure is based on an average of five surveys conducted in selected weeks during the year. A total of 7,747 adults, 18 and older, were personally interviewed in 300 scientifically selected localities across the nation.

The question and trend:

Do you happen to be a member of a church or synagogue?

Church/Synagogue Membership

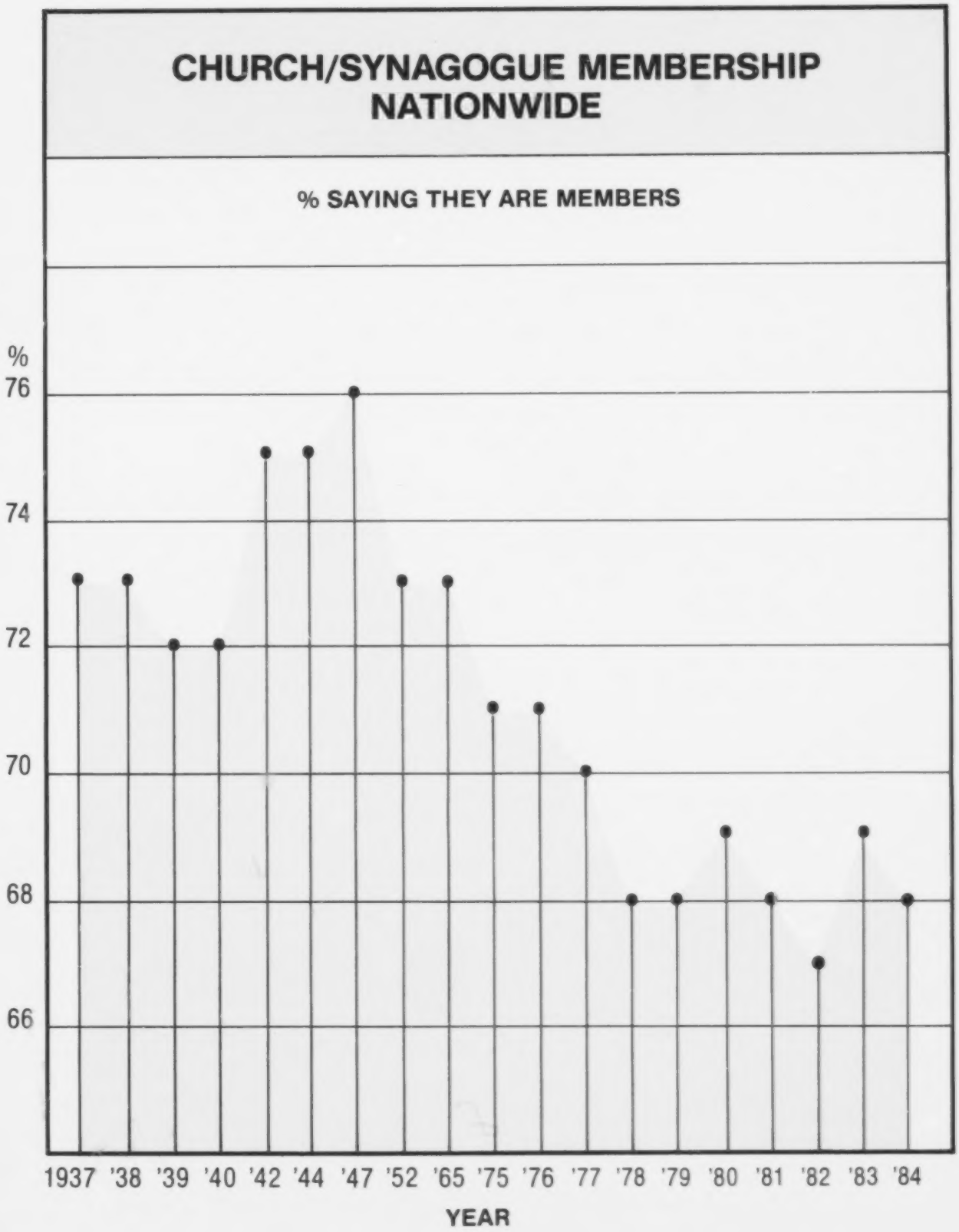
1984	68%
1983	69
1982	67*
1981	68
1980	69
1979	68
1978	68
1977	70
1976	71
1975	71
1965	73
1952	73
1947	76**
1944	75
1942	75
1940	72
1939	72
1938	73
1937	73

*Low point
**High point

Following are the findings by key groups, showing membership highest among women, older persons, southerners, Catholics, blacks, Southern Baptists and Mormons:

Church/Synagogue Membership

NATIONAL	68%
Men	63
Women	73
18-29 years	58
30-49 years	69
50 and older	75
East	67
Midwest	72
South	74
West	57
Catholics	80
Protestants	72
Jews	58
Whites	68
Blacks	74
Hispanics	68
College graduates	69
College incomplete	70
High school graduates	67
High school incomplete	67
All Baptists	74
Southern Baptists	81
Methodists	71
Lutherans	76
Presbyterians	72
Episcopalians	73
Latter-Day Saints	87


CHURCH/SYNAGOGUE MEMBERSHIP NATIONWIDE
% SAYING THEY ARE MEMBERS
%
76
74
72
70
68
66
1937 '38 '39 '40 '42 '44 '47 '52 '65 '75 '76 '77 '78 '79 '80 '81 '82 '83 '84
YEAR

Church Attendance

4 in 10 Adults Attended Church in Typical Week of 1984

Four adults in every 10 (40 percent) attended church or synagogue in a typical week in 1984, matching the figure recorded for 1983.

Churchgoing has remained remarkably constant since 1972, after having declined from the high point of 49 percent recorded in 1955 and 1958. Attendance has not varied by more than one percentage point since 1972.

In 1984, 51 percent of Catholics nationwide attended church in a typical week, compared to 39 percent of Protestants, figures that almost exactly match those from the 1983 audit.

Consistent with earlier years, the rate of churchgoing in 1984 was higher among women than men, and among older persons than younger.

Slightly higher proportions of Americans attended in the South and Midwest than in the East and West.

Adherents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints were the best attenders (53 percent attended in a typical week), followed by Southern Baptists (46 percent).

Catholic Attendance was 74% in 1958

Since 1958, a peak year for church attendance, the decline in churchgoing has been sharpest among Catholics. Attendance at Mass fell 23 points between 1958 and 1982, while Protestant churchgoing has remained remarkably stable since 1958.

The attendance figures are based on surveys conducted in five selected weeks during 1984 in more than 300 scientifically selected localities across the nation. A total of 7,747 adults, 18 and older, were interviewed in person.

Question Asked Since '39

This question was asked:

Did you, yourself, happen to attend church or synagogue in the last seven days?

Following is a selected trend since 1939. The audits from 1955 through 1984 were based on an average of several surveys during each year. The figures prior to 1955 were based on a single annual survey.

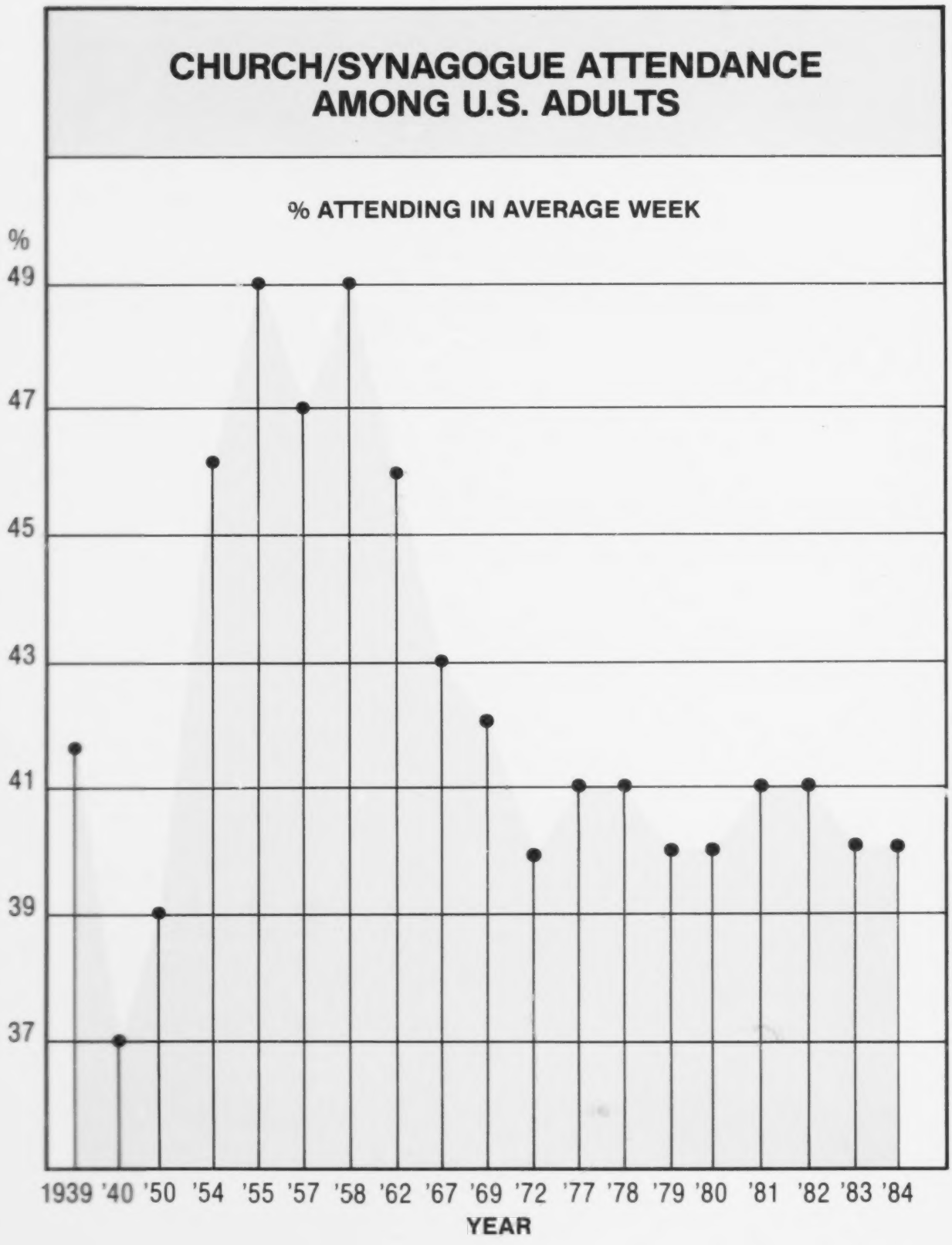
Church/Synagogue Attendance

1984	40%
1983	40
1982	41
1981	41
1980	40
1979	40
1978	41
1977	41
1972	40
1969	42
1967	43
1962	46
1958	49*
1957	47
1955	49*
1954	46
1950	39
1940	37**
1939	41

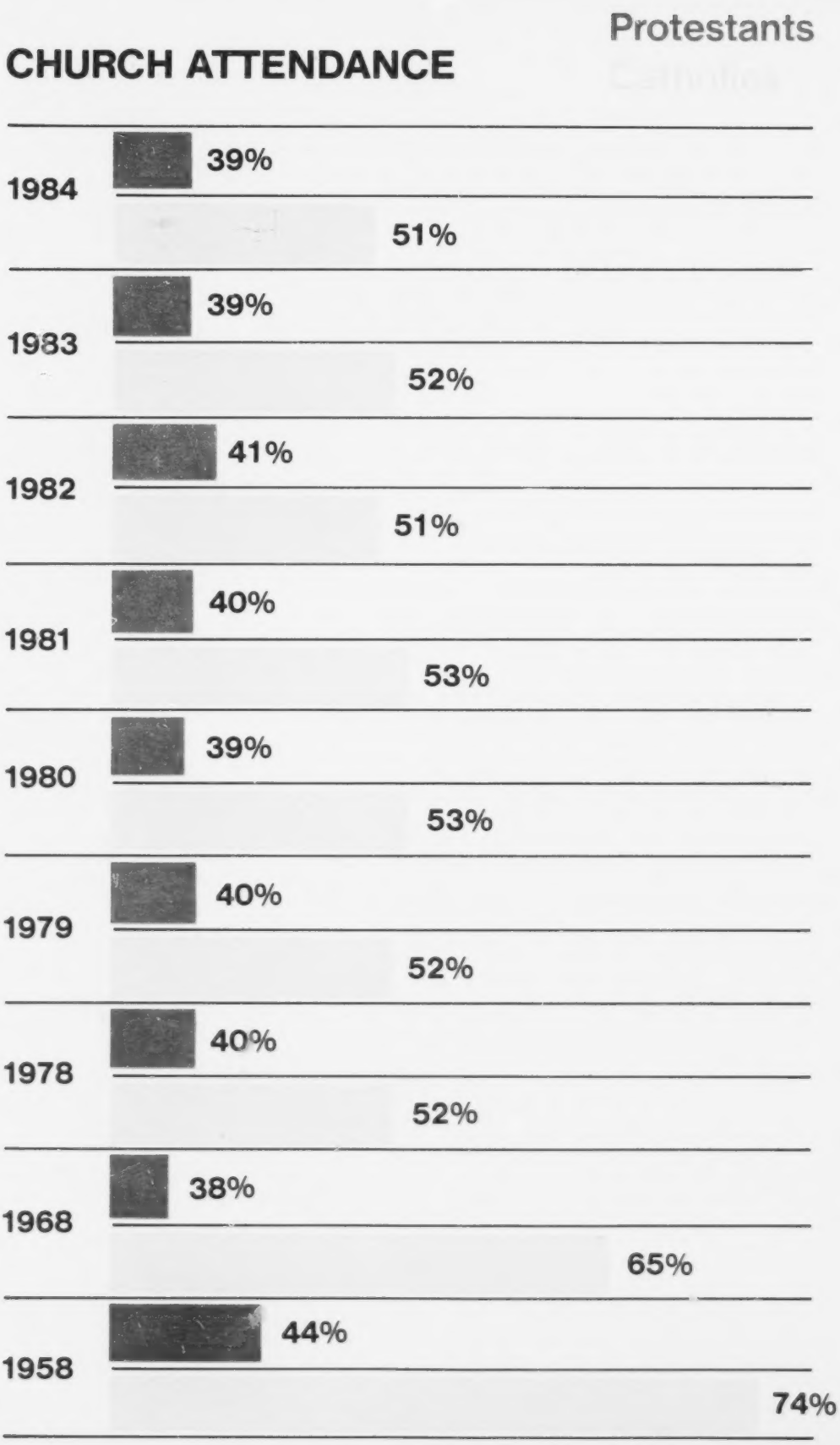
*High point.
**Low point.

The following table shows highlights in the trend for Catholics and Protestants since the peak year of 1958:

	Protestants	Catholics
1984	39%	51%
1983	39	52
1982	41	51
1981	40	53
1980	39	53
1979	40	52
1978	40	52
1968	38	65
1958	44	74


CHURCH/SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE
AMONG U.S. ADULTS
% ATTENDING IN AVERAGE WEEK
%
49
47
45
43
41
39
37
1939 '40 '50 '54 '55 '57 '58 '62 '67 '69 '72 '77 '78 '79 '80 '81 '82 '83 '84
YEAR

CHURCH ATTENDANCE



Prayer in American Life

An Overwhelming 9 in 10 Americans say they Pray

A remarkable nine in 10 Americans say they pray, the same proportion recorded in regular surveys taken over the last four decades. Even among U.S. adults who are "unchurched," as many as three in four say they pray.

While the percentage of Americans who pray at least occasionally has been remarkably stable in surveys since 1948, sharp swings have occurred in the frequency of praying.

For example, the proportion who pray twice a day or more, on the average, declined from 42 percent in 1952 to 27 percent in 1978. Since then, however, praying twice or more daily has shown a slight increase to 31 percent.

Pray Twice a Day or More
(Based on those who pray)

1985	31%
1982	30
1978	27
1965	41
1952	42

Surprisingly little difference is found among population groups in the proportions who ever pray. Some differences emerge, however, among those who pray three times a day or more. While the overall national figure for this group is 19 percent, the percentages for women, older persons, blacks and Protestants are higher, as shown in the table:

Pray Three Times a Day or More
(Based on those who pray)

NATIONAL	19%
Men	19
Women	23
18-24 years	12
25-29 years	24
30-49 years	18
50-64 years	18
65 & older	24
Whites	18
Blacks	23
Hispanics	13
College grads	22
College inc.	16
High school grads	20
Less than H.S. grads	19
Catholics	14
Protestants	22
All Baptists	23
Southern Baptists	32
Methodists	14

Decline in Saying Grace Before Meals

Paralleling the downtrend in frequency of prayer has been a decline in the percentage of Americans who say grace out loud before family meals—from 69 percent in 1962 to 57 percent in 1979.

Here are the questions and trends:

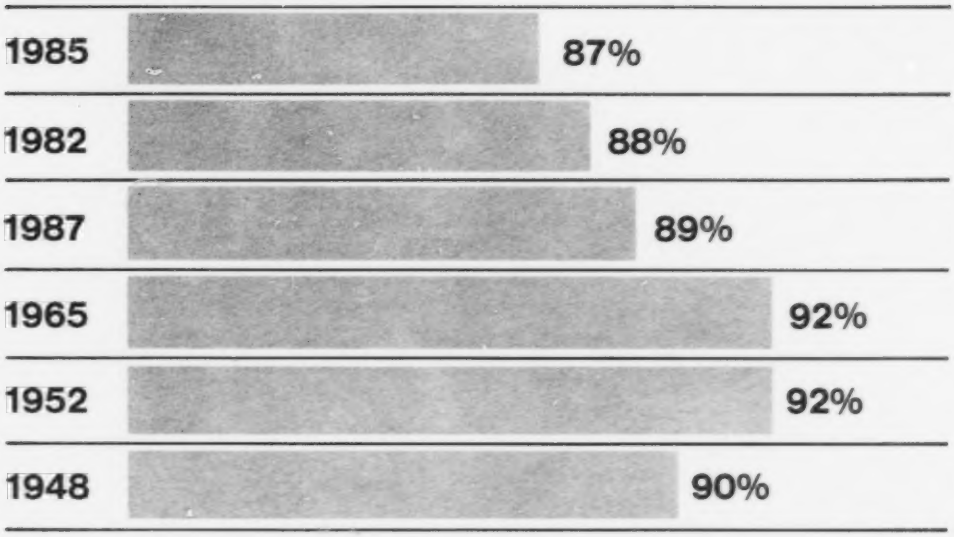
Do you ever pray to God?

Ever Pray to God?

1985	87%
1982	88
1978	89
1965	92
1952	92
*1948	90

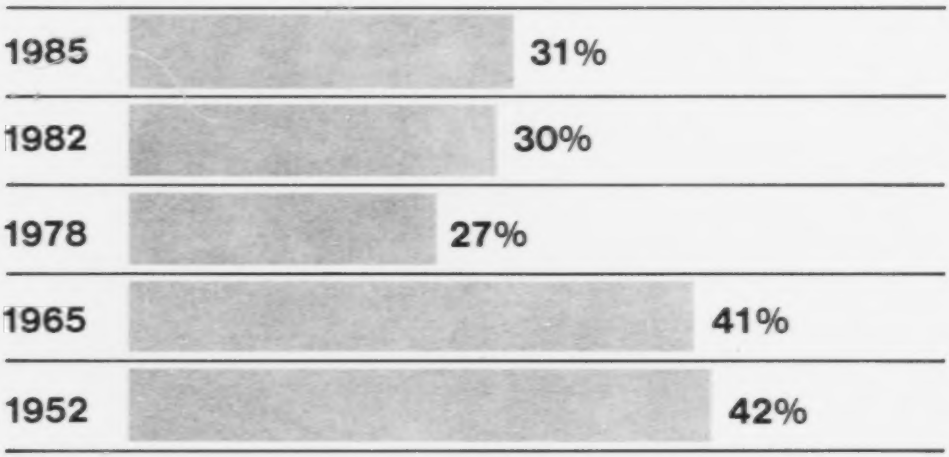
*Question asked in 1948 survey: *Do you ever pray?*

EVER PRAY?



PRAY TWICE A DAY OR MORE

(Based on those who pray)



Bible Reading

The Bible in American Life Today

This article seeks to shed light on four basic questions: (1) How much authority is placed in the Bible? (2) How does the Bible relate to people's religious and spiritual needs? (3) What do Americans believe about the Bible? (4) How often do they read the Bible?

A Gallup survey conducted for *Christianity Today* magazine reveals that 40 percent of Americans would turn first to the Bible to test their own religious beliefs. The next highest proportion (27 percent) say they would seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, followed by 11 percent who said the Church. Another 22 percent gave other responses.

The survey also reveals that frequent Bible readers (once a day or more often) receive greater consolation from their beliefs about God than do infrequent readers.

Bible Seen Necessary 'To Truly Know God'

A survey conducted for Dr. Robert H. Schuller, Senior Pastor of the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, by The Gallup Organization, shows that 34 percent feel that "holding the Bible to be God's truth" is "absolutely necessary for someone to truly know God."

In the same survey, 19 percent say that studying the Bible daily is the most important thing one can do if "trying to be a follower of Jesus."

The Schuller study also reveals that 39 percent find the best way to nourish or strengthen their faith is to read the Bible.

Most say Bible is Word of God

Seven in 10 Americans (72 percent), according to the *Christianity Today* survey, believe the Bible to be the Word of God while only 23 percent hold that it is not. The remaining 5 percent do not express an opinion.

While a large majority of Americans continue to believe the Bible is the Word of God, the current percentage, 72 percent, is lower than the 79 percent recorded in 1965 and the 83 percent recorded in 1952.

Those who believe the Bible is the Word of God can be further differentiated: 30 percent believe the Bible is sometimes mistaken in its statements and teachings and 42 percent believe it is not.
Here is the question and results:

Which one of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?

- The Bible is a collection of writings representing some of the religious philosophies of ancient man 23%
- The Bible is the Word of God but is sometimes mistaken in its statements and teachings 30
- The Bible is the Word of God and is NOT mistaken in its statements and teachings 42
- No opinion 5

100%

Another question, asked at intervals over the last 20 years, shows that approximately four in 10 Americans currently can be described as "literalists"—that is, they believe the Bible is the actual Word of God, to be taken literally, word for word.

Here is the question and the trend, showing a sharp decline between 1965 and 1978 in the percentage of "literalists" among the public:

Which one of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?

- The Bible is the actual Word of God, and is to be taken literally, word for word.
- The Bible is the inspired Word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally.
- The Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history and moral precepts recorded by man.

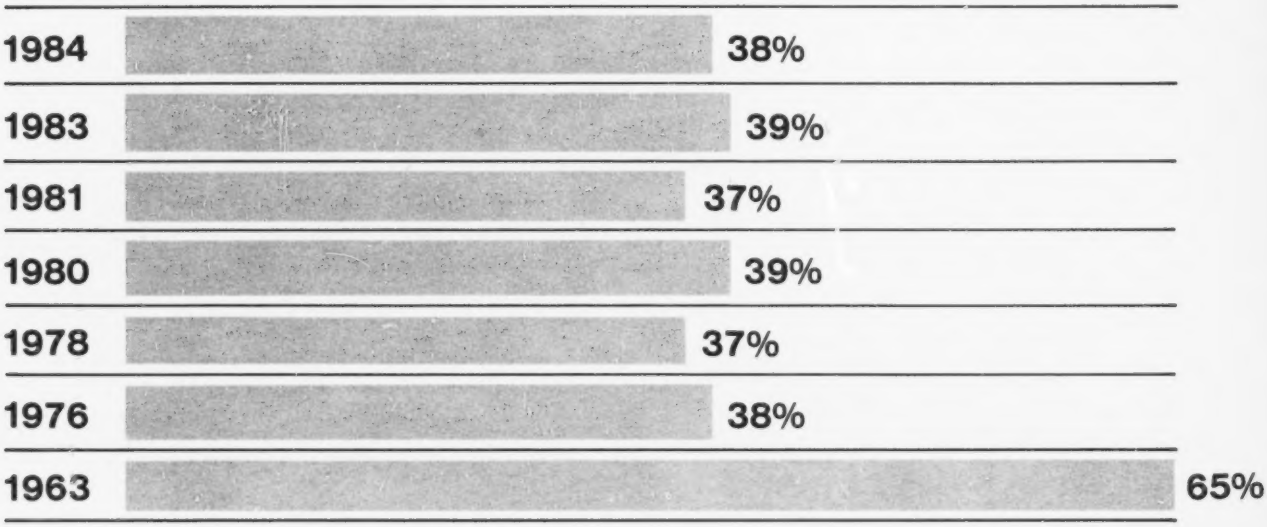
Hold Literal View of Bible

1984	37%
1983	39
1981	37
1980	39
1976	38
1963	65

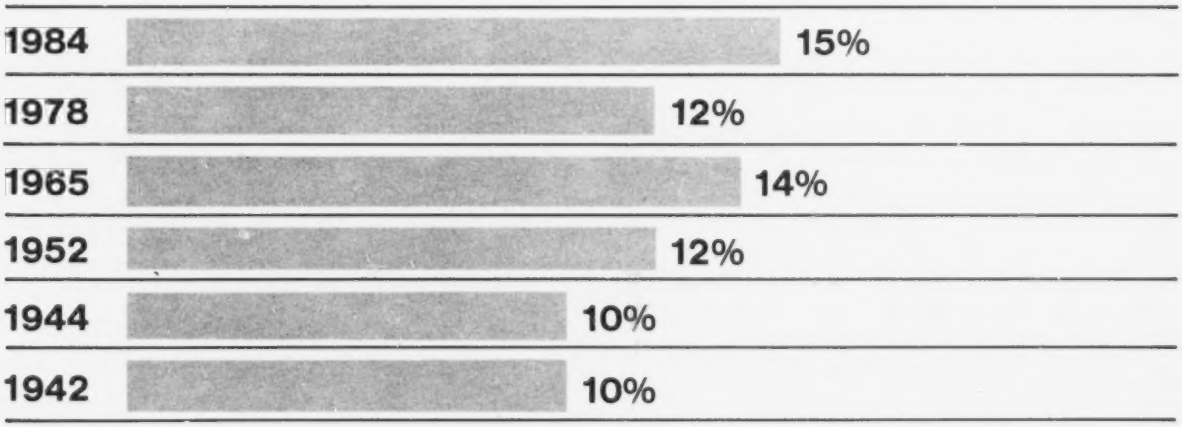
Only 15% Read Bible Daily

Despite the fact that the vast majority of American adults believe the Bible is the Word of God, only 15 percent read the Bible at least daily. At the other extreme, about one person in four (24 percent) never reads the Bible.

BELIEF THAT BIBLE IS ACTUAL WORD OF GOD, AND IS TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY, WORD FOR WORD



READ THE BIBLE AT LEAST DAILY



E. Religious Beliefs

God or Universal Spirit

95% of Americans Believe in God

The vast majority of Americans believe in God or a universal spirit, the proportion having remained remarkably constant during nearly four decades of scientific polling.

Here is the trend, showing little statistical change in the proportion of American adults who believe in God or a universal spirit:

Belief in God or a Universal Spirit

1981	95%[1]
1976	94
1975	94
1969	98
1967	97
1965	97[2]
1959	97[3]
1954	96
1953	98
1952	99[4]
1947	94
1944	96

[1]Survey conducted by Gallup International Research Institutes (GIRI) for the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), and The European Value System Study Group.

[2]Survey conducted for *The Catholic Digest* by The Gallup Organization, Inc.

[3]Survey conducted for *Look* magazine by The Gallup Organization, Inc.

[4]Survey conducted for *The Catholic Digest* by The Gallup Organization, Inc.

Fewer young people than older people believe in God. College-trained persons are somewhat less likely to believe than are persons with less formal education. Farm dwellers and people in small towns are more likely to believe than are persons living in large cities.

But Fewer Believe in a Personal God

While the vast majority of Americans believe in some unifying and organizing power behind the universe, far fewer (66 percent) believe in a personal God who watches over and judges people—the God of Biblical revelation—to whom man is answerable.

Further insight into the importance of God is seen from the 1981 survey conducted by GIRI for CARA and The European Value System Study Group, in which respondents were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 10, how important God is in their lives. The advantage of this scale, compared to a frequency-of-church-attendance scale, is that it overcomes the problem of measuring religious commitment among the unchurched. It also facilitates comparisons between Catholics and Protestants where church attendance practices are different.

American blacks, more than all others, say God is extremely important to their lives, with an average score of 9.04. They are followed by American Hispanics (8.92), South African whites (8.55) and South African blacks (8.45).

The average rating for all Americans on this question is 8.21, exceeded only by South Africans. The country in Europe closest to America in terms of religious attitudes is the Republic of Ireland (8.02). Other European countries with comparatively high scores are Northern Ireland (7.49), Italy (6.96) and Spain (6.39). The lowest are France (4.72), Denmark (4.47) and Sweden (3.99). Japan is also very low (4.49).

Importance of God in Life

(Average ratings on 10-point scale)

United States	Total	8.21
	Blacks	9.04
	Hispanics	8.92
South Africa	Whites	8.55
	Blacks	8.45
Republic of Ireland		8.02
Northern Ireland		7.49
Italy		6.96
Spain		6.39
Belgium		5.94
Great Britain		5.72
West Germany		5.67
Finland		5.35
Netherlands		5.33
France		4.72
Japan		4.49
Denmark		4.47
Sweden		3.99

Believe Jesus is God

3 in 4 Believe Jesus is God

Despite the momentous events and social upheavals of the last three decades, belief that Jesus Christ is God has held firm, with 7 in 10 stating this belief.

The latest figure of 70 percent, recorded in a 1983 survey, compares with 72 percent in 1965 and 74 percent in 1952.

Other Gallup surveys in recent decades show a slightly higher proportion—8 in 10—believing that Jesus was divine—that, at least in some respects, we find the reality of God in Jesus Christ.

Beliefs about Jesus Christ's divinity range from those who believe he was in fact God living among men (approximately half of those who believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ hold this belief), believe that he was only a man but was called by God to reveal God's purpose to the world, believe he was divinely *inspired*, and finally to those who believe he was divine but only in the sense that he embodied the best that is in all men.

While as many as 8 in 10 believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ in some respect, far fewer—6 in 10—indicate they are strongly convinced of his divinity. Similarly, 8 in 10 say they believe that Jesus rose from the dead (physically or spiritually), but closer to 6 in 10 express the certainty that he did so.

Approximately 2 in 10 do not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ or do not express an opinion. Included are those who think Jesus Christ was a great religious leader but not divine, believe that one cannot know the answer, think Jesus Christ did not live, give their religious preference as non-Christian.

In chronological order, here are the Gallup findings on the divinity of Jesus Christ:

> *Do you believe that Jesus Christ ever actually lived? Do you think he was God, or just another leader like Mohammed or Buddha?*

	1952	1965	1983
God	74%	72%	70%
Another religious leader	12	14	11
Son of God, other	3	3	6
Don't know	7	7	4
Jesus never lived	1	1	2
Don't know whether Jesus lived	3	3	7
	100%	100%	100%

(The 1983 results are from a survey conducted for the Robert H. Schuller Ministries. The 1965 and 1952 findings are from surveys conducted for the Catholic Digest, by Ben Gaffin and Associates and The Gallup Organization.)

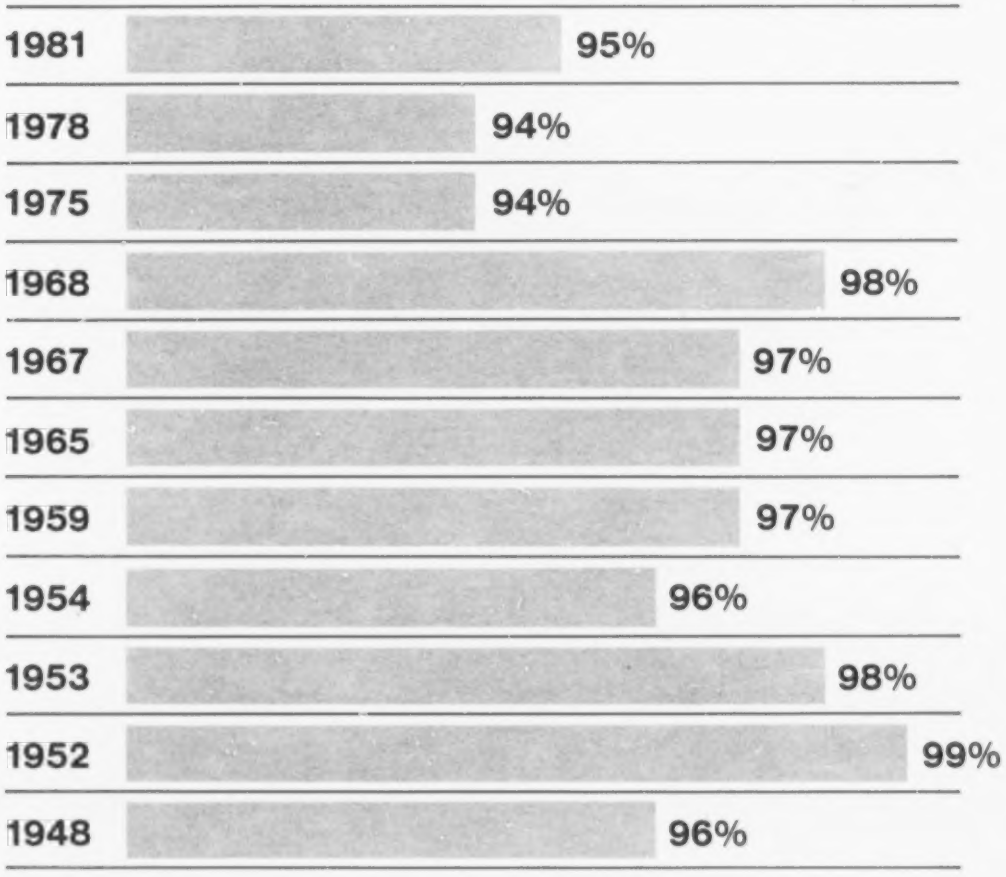
Here's another kind of question about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. You notice that the numbers on this card go from zero, meaning absolute certainty that Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, up to ten, meaning absolute certainty that Jesus Christ did rise from the dead. To indicate how you feel, would you select a number between zero and ten—the lower the number, the less certain you are that Jesus Christ rose from the dead; the higher the number, the more certain you are. (Unchurched American, 4/78)

Rating	
10	64%
9	5
8	6
7	3
6	3
5	6
4	1
3	1
2	1
1	1
0	5
No opinion	4
	100%

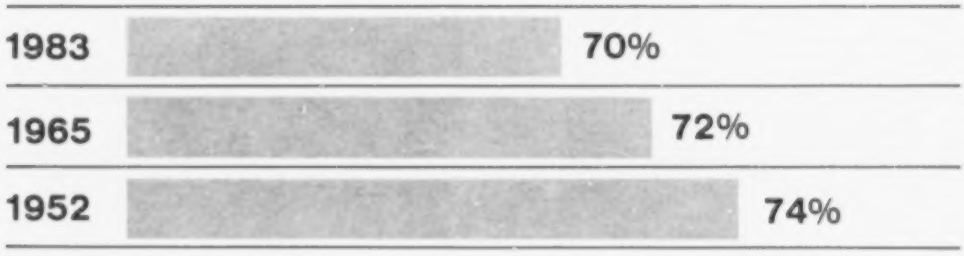
Please tell me if you feel the following statement is completely true, mostly true, mostly untrue, or completely untrue: 'I believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ.' (Gallup Poll, 12/81)

Completely true	60%	85%
Mostly true	25	
Completely untrue	5	9
Mostly untrue	4	
No opinion		6
		100%

BELIEF IN GOD OR A UNIVERSAL SPIRIT



BELIEVE JESUS CHRIST IS GOD



Afterlife

7 in 10 Believe in Life After Death

Seven in 10 Americans (71 percent) say they believe in life after death, a proportion that closely parallels the findings of other surveys going back to 1944.

Here is the U.S. trend in belief in an afterlife, showing a high point of 77 percent recorded in 1952 and a low point of 67 percent in 1980:

Belief in Life After Death/Afterlife

1981	71%[1]
1980	67[2]
1978	71[3]
1975	69
1968	73
1965	75[4]
1961	74
1957	74
1952	77[5]
1948	68
1944	76

[1]Based on a survey conducted by Gallup International Research Institutes (GIRI) for the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) and the European Value System Study Group.

[2]Based on a survey conducted for *Adventures in Immortality*, by George Gallup, Jr. and William Proctor, McGraw-Hill, 1982.

[3]Based on a survey, the *Unchurched American*, conducted for a consortium of 30 denominations, convened by the National Council on Churches in Christ.

[4]Based on a survey conducted for *The Catholic Digest* by The Gallup Organization, Inc.

[5]Based on a survey conducted for *The Catholic Digest* by Ben Gaffin Associates.

A higher proportion of believers are found in the U.S. than in 10 other nations in a 13-nation survey. The figure for the people of Northern Ireland (72 percent) is statistically the same, while the percentage for the Republic of Ireland (76 percent) is slightly higher.

The following question and results are, based on the survey conducted by GIRI for CARA and the European Value System Study group:

"Which, if any, of the following do you believe in?...life after death?"

	Yes, believe	No, don't believe	Don't know
Republic of Ireland	76%	14%	11%
Northern Ireland	72	14	14
UNITED STATES	71	17	13
Spain	55	26	18
Finland	49	32	20
Italy	47	33	19
Great Britain	45	35	19
Norway	44	40	16
Netherlands	42	40	18
West Germany	39	40	21
Belgium	37	39	24
France	35	50	19
Denmark	26	55	19

*Totals sometimes do not add to 100% due to rounding.

Belief in Heaven and Hell Also Firm

Little change has also occurred in America's belief in heaven and hell over the last three decades. In the latest (1980) survey (conducted for the book *Adventures in Immortality*), 71 percent expressed a belief in heaven, while 53 percent said they believe in hell.

Here are the questions asked and the trends:

Do you think there is a heaven where people who had led good lives are eternally rewarded?

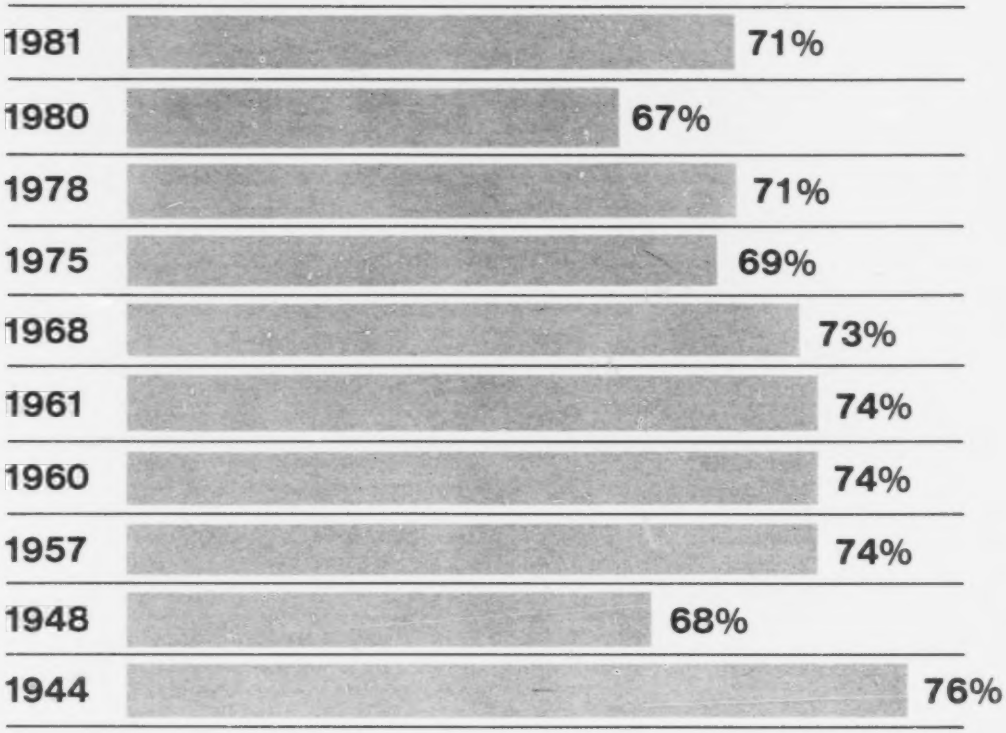
Belief in Heaven

1980	71%
1965	68
1952	72

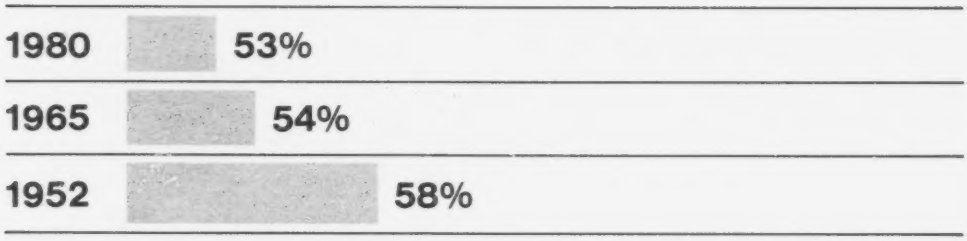
Belief in Hell

1980	53%
1965	54

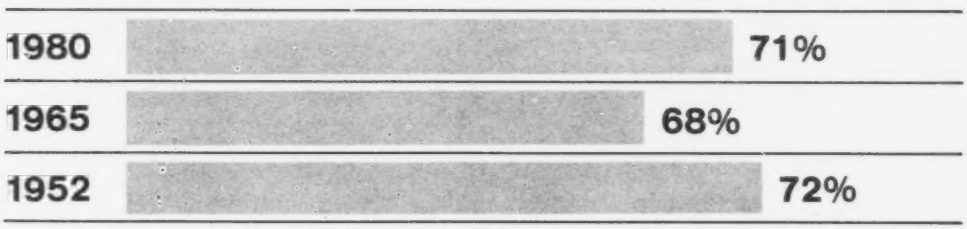
BELIEF IN LIFE AFTER DEATH



BELIEF IN HELL



BELIEF IN HEAVEN



Methodology

Design of the Sample

The design of the sample used by the Gallup Poll for its standard surveys of public opinion is that of a replicated area probability sample down to the block level in the case of urban areas and to segments of townships in the case of rural areas.

After stratifying the nation geographically and by size of community in order to insure conformity of the sample with the 1980 Census distribution of the population, over 350 different sampling locations or areas are selected on a mathematically random basis from within cities, towns, and counties which have in turn been selected on a mathematically random basis. The interviewers have no choice whatsoever concerning the part of the city, town, or county in which they conduct their interviews.

Approximately five interviews are conducted in each randomly selected sampling point. Interviewers are given maps of the area to which they are assigned and they are required to follow a specified travel pattern on contacting households. At each occupied dwelling unit, interviewers are instructed to select respondents by following a prescribed systematic method. This procedure is followed until the assigned numbers of interviews with male and female adults have been completed.

After the survey data have been collected and processed, the demographic characteristics of survey respondents are balanced to match the latest U.S. Census Bureau estimates of the adult populations demographic characteristics. The data are also weighted by the probability of finding individual respondents at home. These weighting procedures ensure the representativeness of the sample.

Since this sampling procedure is designed to produce a sample which approximates the adult civilian population (18 and older) living in private households (that is, excluding those in prisons and hospitals, hotels, religious and educational institutions, and on military reservations), the survey results can be applied to this population for the purpose of projecting percentages into numbers of people. The manner in which the sample is drawn also produces a sample which approximates the population of private households in the United States. Therefore, survey results can also be projected in terms of numbers of households.

Sampling Error

In interpreting survey results, it should be borne in mind that all sample surveys are subject to sampling error, that is, the extent to which the results may differ from those that would be obtained if the whole population surveyed had been interviewed. The size of such sampling errors depends largely on the number of interviews.

The table on the following page may be used in estimating sampling error. The computed allowances have taken into account the effect of the sample design upon sampling error. They may be interpreted as indicating the range (plus or minus the figure shown) within which the results of repeated samplings in the same time period could be expected to vary, 95 percent of the time, assuming the same sampling procedure, the same interviewers, and the same questionnaire were used.

Table A shows the allowances that should be made for the sampling error of a percentage.

The table should be used as follows: Say a reported percentage is 33 for a group which includes 1500 respondents. Go to the row labeled "percentages near 30" and then to the column headed "1500." The number at this point is 3, which means that the 33 percent obtained in the sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 3 points. Another way of saying it is that very probably (95 times out of 100) the average of repeated samplings would be somewhere between 30 and 36, with the most likely figure the 33 obtained.

In comparing survey results in two sub-samples, such as men and women, the question arises as to how large a difference between them must be before one can be reasonably sure that it reflects a real difference. In Tables B and C, the number of points which must be allowed for in such comparisons is indicated.

For percentages near 20 or 80, use Table B, for those near 50, Table C. For percentages in between, the error factor is between that shown in the two tables.

Here is an example of how the tables should be used: Say 50 percent of men and 40 percent of women respond the same way to a question, a difference of 10 percentage points. Can it be said with any assurance that the 10 point difference reflects a real difference between men and women on the question? (Unless otherwise noted, the sample contains approximately 750 men and 750 women.)

Because the percentages are near 50, consult Table C. Since the two samples are about 750 persons each, look for the place in the table where the column and row labeled "750" converge. The number seven appears there. This means the allowance for error should be seven points, and the conclusion that the percentage among men is somewhere between 3 and 17 points higher than the percentage among women would be wrong only about 5% of the time. In other words, there is a considerable likelihood that a difference exists in the direction observed and that it amounts to at least 3 percentage points.

If, in another case, male respondents amount to 22 percent, and female to 24 percent, consult Table B because these percentages are near 20. The column and row labeled "750" converge on the number 5. Obviously then, the 2 point difference is inconclusive.

Sampling Tolerances

TABLE A — **Allowance for Sampling Error of a Percentage**

In Percentage Points (at 95 in 100 confidence level)*

	Size of Sample						
	1500	1000	750	600	400	200	100
Percentages near 10	2	2	3	3	4	5	8
Percentages near 20	3	3	4	4	5	7	10
Percentages near 30	3	4	4	5	6	8	12
Percentages near 40	3	4	5	5	6	9	12
Percentages near 50	3	4	5	5	6	9	13
Percentages near 60	3	4	5	5	6	9	12
Percentages near 70	3	4	4	5	6	8	12
Percentages near 80	3	3	4	4	5	7	10
Percentages near 90	2	2	3	3	4	5	8

TABLE B — **Allowance for Sampling Error of the Difference**

In Percentage Points (at 95 in 100 confidence level)*

	Percentages near 20 or percentages near 80			
	750	600	400	200
Size of the Sample				
750	5			
600	6	6		
400	6	7	7	
200	8	8	9	10

TABLE C — **Percentages near 50**

Size of the Sample				
750	7			
600	7	7		
400	8	8	9	
200	10	10	11	13

*The chances are 95 in 100 that the sampling error is not larger than the figures shown.

RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF AMERICANS